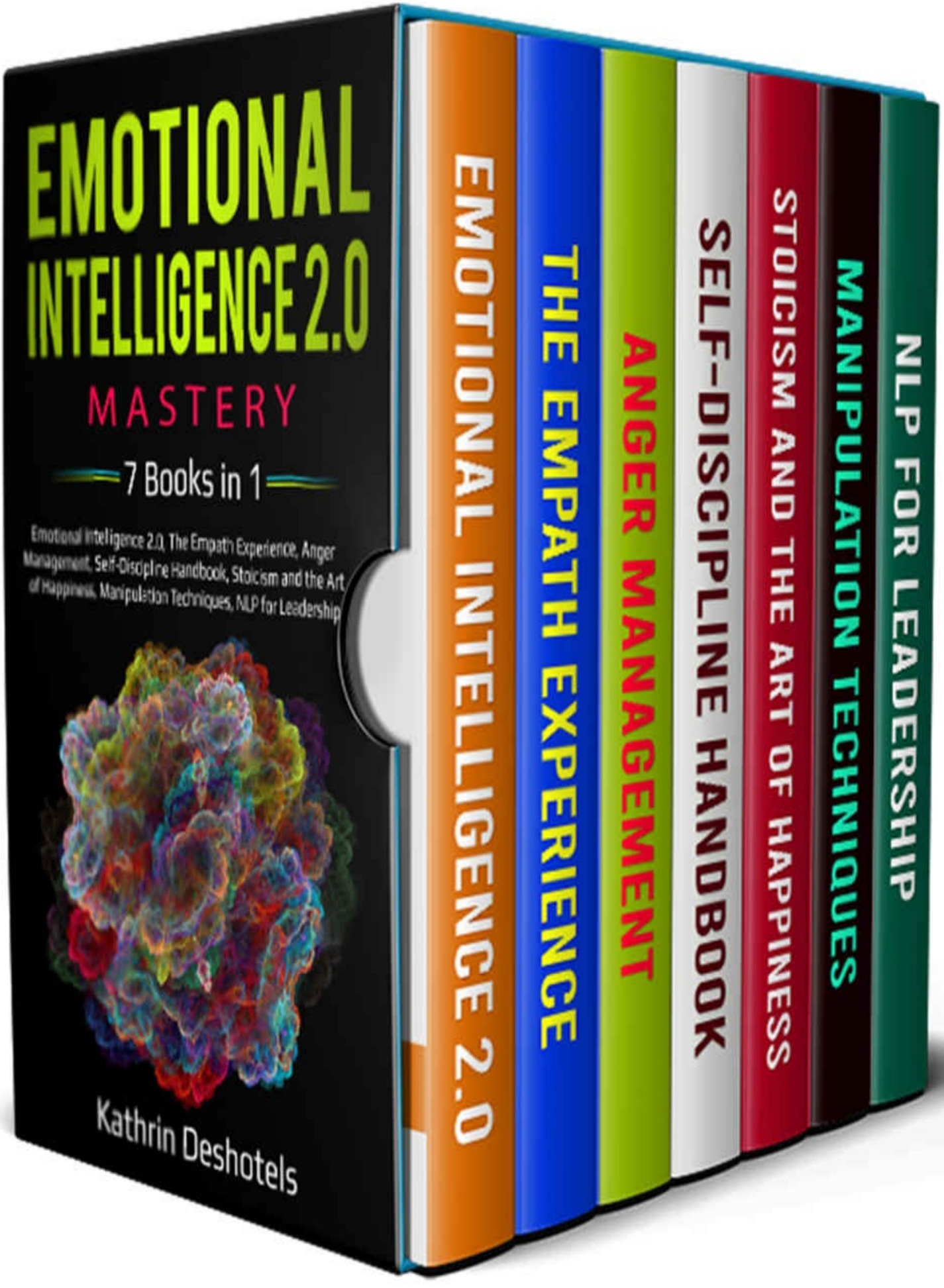
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 2.0
MASTERY
7 Books in 1
Emotional Intelligence 2.0, The Empath Experience, Anger Management, Self-Discipline Handbook, Stoicism and the Art of Happiness, Manipulation Techniques, NLP for Leadership
Kathrin Deshotels
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 2.0
THE EMPATH EXPERIENCE
ANGER MANAGEMENT
SELF-DISCIPLINE HANDBOOK
STOICISM AND THE ART OF HAPPINESS
MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES
NLP FOR LEADERSHIP

SHOUT
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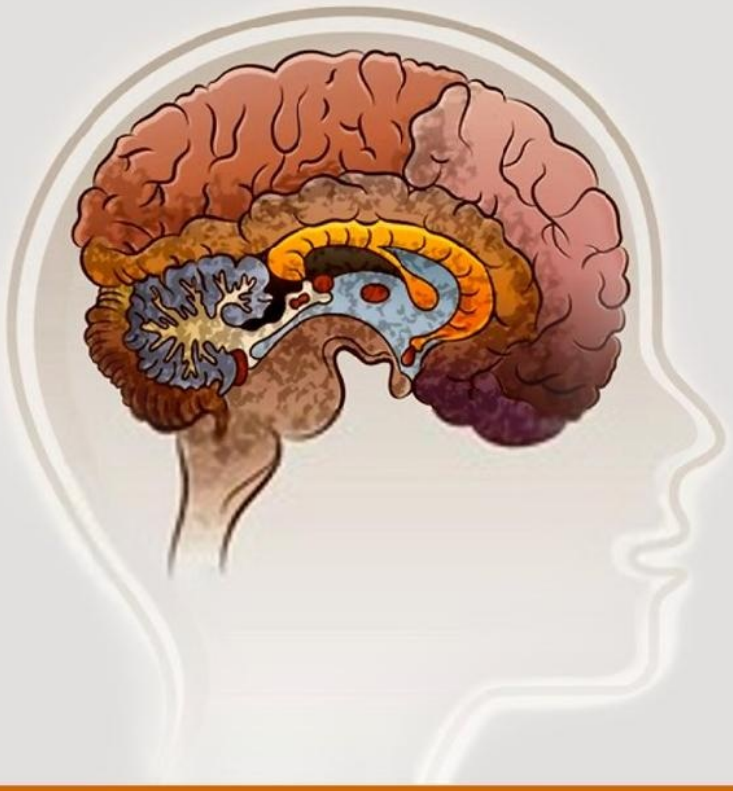
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 2.0



Why it Matters More Than IQ

Kathrin Deshotels

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on purchasing Emotional Intelligence 2.0, and I want to thank you. There are thousands of books on Emotional Intelligence, so I appreciate the fact that you chose this one! I made sure to make every effort to ensure that it has as much useful information as possible, so please enjoy it! You should also be in full acceptance of yourself, who you are, and what you plan to do with your life. Being self-aware and having the ability to accept things just as they are, is a great sign that you are on the right track. Being self-aware and mindful is a good example of someone who displays emotional intelligence, which says that they have the ability to control the reactions they have to their emotions. Taking the time to try and improve your emotional skills will also improve your personal and your professional life as well. When you are looking to make a relationship stronger, improve communication, and restore trust, having these tools will be a great help you.

Among other topics, we will be discussing the four skills, which are needed in order to have emotional intelligence:

●***Self-Management***: When you have the ability to control impulses, urges, and other negative behaviors.

●***Self-Awareness:*** Being mindful of your emotions and having the ability to control reactions and responses.

●***Social Awareness:*** Having the ability to read the body language of others, as well as being able to interact with people without feeling socially awkward.

●***Relationship Management:*** This means that you have the ability to pull out the best in everyone else around you, it is about you being able to inspire, motivate and influence them, as well as making sure to build important bonds.

An emotionally intelligent individual is highly conscious of their own emotions, negativity, frustration, sadness, and has the ability to identify and manage them. These types of people can easily sense the emotions that others experience because they are so tuned into their own. When you show sensitivity to the emotions of others, both from within yourself and from your actual social environment, this can help you to become a better friend, leader, or mate to your romantic partner.

DEFINITION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

WHEN YOU HAVE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, it ensures you have the ability to be aware of, control, and express your emotions, being able to understand and evaluate the behaviors of others. When you have a true understanding of yourself, you increase your ability to deal with and understand other people; you become emotionally mature. This means that you will have the ability to laugh at yourself and all of the mistakes or bad decisions that you have made in life and to help you analyze how you are perceived by others. Self-regulation is when you are able to manage those urges, impulses, and thinking before you react to a situation. You should be mature enough to take responsibility for your actions and decisions, and having an open mind when it comes to changes. You should also be able to come to the conclusion that just because someone is yelling at you, this does not mean that it is you they are upset with, it could be the circumstance that they may be in when you are emotionally mature, it can help you to understand this. Being motivated to become a better person in life is a good sign that someone has emotional intelligence because they are focused on self-improvement instead of material things. It can also assist you in becoming more productive in your personal and working relationships because you will have a better understanding of how to control your emotions. You will also become a better leader, student, team player thinker, and winner. You will find yourself taking time to think deliberately about everything that you say, the actions that you take, and as a result, you will be more mindful and will make a thought out decision. Basically, emotional intelligence is the ability to use your

own emotional knowledge about yourself and others to make healthy choices. In addition, an emotionally intelligent person will always welcome the pessimism of others, because it gives them the inspiration to crush those doubts and inspire someone else.

Why it Matters More Than IQ

IQ, which is largely genetic and barely changes from childhood is measured from a standardized test, which determines how smart you are, identify high levels of intelligence and determine if there is any mental illness present. Emotional intelligence, with much patience, practice, and dedication, can be learned at any age. You can focus on the one skill that you need to most, and once you master that one, you can move onto the next one. The bottom line is, having emotional intelligence is far more important than having a high IQ, which cannot help you achieve better connections with other human beings. Your IQ will show your intelligence level, but if you have no creativity, goals, determination, and social skills, you will not be able to succeed in life. Having the ability to use your self-awareness in order to be more understanding of others as well as their emotions is a greater skill to have. Living on this earth as a human being, we will have to have some interaction with other people at some point in our lives. Emotional intelligence will also assist you in getting over mishaps, setbacks, and dealing with some of the bad decisions made while living life. It is a great idea to have friends, family, and co-workers that you have built as a support system for yourself, this way you can turn to them when you are feeling down. A huge part of being able to get through life and dealing with the many things that life throws our way is making sure that we have people that we love and trust around us during our journey through life. The bottom line is that having a high IQ has nothing to do with you being able to exist, communicate and interact with others, which requires the ability to be self-aware, show compassion, understanding, and kindness when people are going through tough times. Your IQ will not teach you how to love, understand, help or show

empathy to another human being, but having emotional intelligence will carry you much further in life. As we know, many of those individuals who have high IQ levels, are never the happiest or the most fulfilled in their lives, they are usually mean and miserable. Not to mention, we all have met someone who is extremely book smart but has no common sense at all, can barely survive in the real world, which is actually a sad sight to see.

Common Sense Vs. Book Smart

I have been in the company of some very intelligent people who did not have an inch of common sense, and they cannot recognize when it is time to work with others, and many times they do not even know how to change a light bulb. It is very interesting to interact with someone who can recite the declaration of independence, or recall a book report from years ago, but cannot tell you what it takes to make a baby stop crying. People who are extremely book smart are really far from what I like to call human reality; they are so caught up in the fact that they are intelligent, that they never take the time to become better humans because most of them feel superior to others.

Why Emotional Intelligence Is Important

If you are walking around without the components of emotional intelligence, some would say that you are similar to a zombie because you are not connected to any feelings at all; personally, I like to call them robots. I am sure that we all have been around someone who seems to have no human feelings at all, just cold as an ice block, or metal as a robot. It is very easy to tell someone who has no emotional intelligence; most of them are controlling, narcissistic, and very easy to spot. The individuals that they usually keep company with are people with no goals or drive, low self-esteem, and people who depend on them for something. This is because they know that these are the type of people who will allow themselves to consistently mistreated and

disrespected. These abusive personality types have no idea or interest in how to treat people with respect. They are only focused on their constant need to feed their ego. When you work with someone who is empathetic, confident and self-aware, things can be absolutely amazing. The way that they will support those around them, embrace the ideas of others and actually care about people in the world shows through the things that they do in life. Basically, being a good person, knowing who you are, having the ability to communicate with others and being a caring individual is more effective than having a high IQ.

Change Your Life With Emotional Intelligence

If you are not engaged in healthy relationships with those that you love, if you are the person that no one wants to be around at work, if you are the one who people call if they have to, then you might want to consider doing a self-evaluation. Many times, we go through life just trying to make it; a lot of people did not have anyone to guide them or give them directions on how to manage basic things in everyday life. There may come a time when there is something or someone to wake us up and remind us that we are going down the wrong road. This is a blessing from God because he knows that all people on earth did not come from loving families, so he will send you family members who will love you and be there for you in his name, you just need to be open to them when they arrive. Sometimes we may not be aware of the way that we come off, how our character and personality are perceived, which can have negative results if the behavior never changes. If you have a desire to become a better person, to be able to have peace in your life, to improve your relationships, or just to get better at interacting and communicating with others, this is a good thing. Emotional intelligence can definitely have an effect on the way that you perform at school or work when you have a high level. You will be able to better navigate through life on a personal basis. You will excel socially as well as in the workplace, simply because you are now aware of how to process emotions. Many great leaders and truly successful people are emotionally mature and in touch with

their power. This is why they are so confident and have the ability to inspire and motivate others to achieve greatness in their lives.

Know Your Power

Many of us do not realize how much power there is in self-talk, because we usually tap into it for the wrong reasons, like those times when we limit ourselves or use up time talking ourselves out of trying something new. You should get into the habit of using this to replace all negative thoughts with positive ones. It also can be used to visualize yourself with all of the things that you aspire to have in life. Imagine that you have a friend over your house; they constantly judge you, criticize you, and the way that you live your life. Now, take a moment to imagine this person has an annoying sounding voice on top of all of the negative energy. Think about how long it would take for you to get kick them out of your house and possibly out of your life. It probably would not take too long. As soon as you reach your limit, that person is going to be gone quickly, because you have finally had enough of them. Now, imagine that you are that annoying person with that crazy voice, you need to be strong enough to take the same type of action, which is kicking that voice out of your head! You are now going to make an effort to replace that negative voice with something more positive and permanent, because the outcome and results you end up having, are going to be a result of the choices that you are making now.

Use What You See

There is always the option of mirroring or trying to copy the work ethic of other successful people. You can also consistently work on a new skill mentally and physically until it becomes natural for you. As young children, we would always try to immolate our parents and we automatically tried to act in the same way we saw them behave. When you make a choice to copy or model the movements of someone who is extremely confident, eventually, your mindset

will be of the same confidence level, which is a direct result of your mind, and your body is eternally linked together. You can begin to operate your body in the same manner as the person you are trying to copy, and eventually, your mind will begin to think in the same type of way that they do. The most important thing to remember here is, repetition, when you consistently do the same thing over and again, day after day, week after week, eventually it will become automatic for you.

Self-Awareness

You should take the time to self-reflect so that you can get really clear about how your emotions affect you and how much control you have over the reactions and responses to things that may upset you. Being mindful about how you will respond when certain emotions manifest within you will help you when you are interacting with other people will cause you to keep yourself out of certain situations. It is all about knowing how you will react to specific people or situations, which can only benefit you in the future. Come up with a list of five ways that you react when you are emotionally challenged, and what it is that you do to keep control of yourself in those moments. You may take a moment to gather yourself, you may want to go and eat, or you might want to remove yourself from the situation for a moment. The point is to know exactly how things affect you, what it is that triggers negative reactions from you, and how you can manage that. One of the best things you can do to help yourself calm down is to be mindful of your breathing, making sure to take deep abdominal breaths are the best way to go. You also need to recognize that others are mirrors for yourself, be mindful of the role that you play in any reaction you have to another person if you find someone irritating, and try to figure out what it is about you that is finding them irritating. You and your personality have a role in every perception you have about other people, as well as the challenges that are going on inside of you. You may be contributing without knowing. This does not mean that this person is not annoying or irritating; it just means that you need to

take a closer look at yourself. Many times your perception of someone will add unnecessary thoughts or ideas to the situation. If you suddenly feel like there is something that does not feel authentic, it is most likely because you are picking up on their subtle nonverbal cues, which are inconsistent with what they are saying. When you pay close attention to someone while they are talking, you can actually feel when they are being dishonest by paying attention to your own emotional reactions to them. People can really say good things and try to convince you that they are genuine, but you can sometimes feel when something is not right, so you should always listen to and trust your gut feeling. Once again, evaluate your role in how you are looking at them, they might remind you of your father, who may not have been the best person to you. If this is the case, you might judge this person based on things that your father does or have done in the past, so you need to be mindful of your perception and why you see them the way that you do.

IMPROVING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

NURTURING yourself needs to happen on a consistent basis so that you will continue to believe that you are loving and capable of giving love to others as well. This also involves being mindful enough to realize when to give you love and to make sure that it is only to those who deserve it. Even when you go back and forth in your mind about feeling like you are not good enough, embrace the fact that you are uncomfortable, allow yourself to feel that, and try to control the way that you react. It is all about having the ability, to be honest about the feelings that you may be having, then you can focus on how to change your actions to be more pleasing and positive. Use your imagination to get rid of people in your mind, your memory, or even out of your face temporarily, until you can get away from them in reality. There are several ways that you can make sure that you are going to be ok in every situation that you find yourself getting into, it is all about using the power of choice, choosing to look at things in a different way. This can have any kind of special effects that you want. You can make any changes that you want. You can create only the type of voices that you want to hear and characters that you want to see. If you know someone who has been mean or disrespectful towards you, they can automatically be turned into a puff smoke that disappears. This will work well when you have to work with difficult people, it is a fun way to take your mind away from them and the environment, in order to get through your day. You have to make sure that you are ok at all times, and working in a stressful environment, call cause you to have serious health issues if you are forced to continue work under the same

conditions. You should really take a moment so that you can truly be aware of how this can help you. It offers major assistance with learning how to control and master all of your reactions and responses.

Take advantage of those positive emotions when they are present, and use them to think of things just the way you want it to be, believe in that, be patient and wait for things to happen naturally. Make sure to be aware of exactly what the situation is so that you can make the best choice on how to deal with things going forward, while managing to keep a positive attitude, this will help make you get the outcome that you want and have planned for. You always want to seek help and support from your friends and family, in a way that you never have before, this is more is vital than people want to admit. When you feel secure knowing that you have that person or people that you can count on, it can decrease stress. This is the time that we need to cherish, nurture, build, and hold on to those important relationships that we have in our lives. This is what is important in our last days. Just keep in mind that there are thousands of lonely human beings walking on this planet, with no one to love them, no one to hold them, no one to tell them that they are loved, so do not take these things for granted. Another huge part of self-care is taking the time to show yourself some extra love, reward and compliment yourself when you accomplish a goal or when you do something really great, this does wonder for your self-esteem and your confidence. When you make it a point to admire, respect, and approve of yourself, it builds up your self-worth and adds to the positive thoughts that you will have. You are actually feeding your spirit with the proper nutrition with each positive statement and thought about yourself.

Self-Esteem & Self-Confidence

High self-esteem is very important to your emotional health because the way you think about yourself can have an effect on the way that you do

business and the way that you interact with others. You need to like and respect yourself so that this is projected when you are in the presence of other people, the more love you have for yourself and the things that you are doing, the more confident you will be. One of the first steps to achieving high self-esteem is to dig down deep and get to know who you really are, your real dreams and desires, your likes, and dislikes. This will help to make sure that you are living your truth. When you have a genuine love for yourself, the better you are going to be at the things that you are working on, because you will be doing them with so much pride, which will enhance your confidence even more.

Self-Control & Self-Discipline

Self-control can be attained and mastered; you just have to want it and be determined that nothing is going to stop you from working hard to get yourself on point. This can take plenty of hard work, especially if you have a history of living out of control, giving in to all of your urges and temptations, and have no self-management. It is going to take consistent focusing on your mental strength and work on building it up, which will assist you when it is time to fight some of those urges. You will have to make some tough decisions that involve removing certain habits, creating new goals; this is vital to achieving self-discipline. It will take skillful planning, strategic thinking and possibly a checklist, which will ensure that you are staying on track and doing the things that you are supposed to do. Changing the way that you currently live, which is on the wild side, will have a very positive effect on your life because you will have less stress, healthier relationships, and a more peaceful presence. The next time you are tempted to go and spend money that you know you need to be saving, just remind yourself of what you are taking away from the future that you have planned. This may not work at first, but if you are consistent with doing this, it will serve as another tool to assist you in becoming more self-disciplined. When you are faced with having to deal with difficult situations, circumstances, and people, this can be another effective tool to use, because it is

a way of testing your level of self-control. You will get better at dealing with having to interact with certain people when you too, especially when you are dealing with the individuals that challenge you the most by being difficult or annoying.

Knowing Your Values

When you live your life by prioritizing what is most important to you, then you will not have to think twice when you face a moral or ethical decision; you will choose right. Make a point to always stand on your values, do not back down, for anyone, including yourself. We all know that person in the mirror can be the one to cause us the most setbacks, so just remember to check yourself when you need to, in order to stay on track. Make sure that others respect the boundaries and limits that you have set, and remember to stay consistent so that they will understand that you mean business.

Being Authentic

Authenticity is not about showing and sharing everything about yourself. It is all about embracing exactly who you are and standing on that. Be you; God only created one of you, so be that the fullest extent and show your stuff. This also means being completely honest; being who you really are no matter who is around, do not change or alter your personality to please or impress anyone else. Make it a point to say what you mean, and mean what you say, while sticking to your values, principles and still being available to others. Many people will be turned off or intimidated by your authenticity, but that is their insecurities to deal with, not yours, just stay focused on who you are and how you carry yourself.

o More Isolation

A huge cause for stress involves not having emotional support and people who love you in your corner that you know you can trust. When you make it a habit of isolating yourself from others, because you prefer being alone, this can be dangerous, as you are already feeling stressed, it will add more negative emotions. When dealing with high levels of stress, placing yourself into isolation can actually increase the negative emotions and feelings that you are experiencing. If you are an individual who does not have a lot of close friends, you should start getting out and make it a habit to meet and interact with new people on a regular basis. Do not allow past experiences with so-called friends to keep you from being open to making new friends, there are many people in the world, and they are not all bad. You should always have the courage to love again, trust again, and try to live actively because that is what life is all about. The experiences that you will have are going to create memories, both good and bad that will last for a lifetime. The more time that you spend alone, the higher the chance that you will place yourself in danger of becoming even more stressed, more depressed and finally, dependent on isolation instead of being with other people. If you consistently allow yourself to be detached from the world, it is going to become normal to you, so you will not even notice that you are actually trapped in that isolated existence. This is unhealthy, because you can fall into a cycle of isolation, and the longer that you stay there, the harder it will be to get out. You will eventually become what you believe, so the more you believe you cannot change your ways, or get out of that situation, then the longer you will stay in that environment. If you continue to convince yourself that no one is able to help you, the more you will believe that, and you will always try to convince other people of that as well. Believe it or not, you can become codependent on negativity, guilt, and anger, which all will eventually breed shame because you have convinced yourself that you are not able to cope with the world on your own. It can become an addiction, the same way that people get stuck in abusive or toxic relationships, and they can never seem to get themselves out of the situation. This will usually cause them to develop a sick sense of excitement, and they begin to attach abuse and neglect to feeling excited. You do not want to

develop the habit of attaching yourself to things that are unhealthy, including people, habits, and relationships, because this behavior can be difficult to stop. Now that you have begun to feel more comfortable getting out into the world and interacting with strangers on a more frequent level, be sure that you do not fall back into the habit of solitude. This can be easy to do, because you may think that you have accomplished a huge step by meeting quite a few people, which can cause you to feel that you do not need to go out as often. You do not want this to happen, because out of old habit, you will start to isolate yourself all over again because this is where you have been comfortable in the past. It is ok to spend time alone, as long as you have the correct perspective on solitude, using it only to discover an inward quietness, or self-awareness, not to find comfort, stability, and fulfillment. During those quiet moments, this is when you will probably get the clarity and get answers that you have been asking for in your heart and spirit.

Human Interaction

You should have as much interaction with people as you possibly can, especially if you have been isolating yourself from others, make it a point to start going out on a regular basis. Avoid those negative thoughts that have you believing that all of your experiences with new people are going to be bad or filled with drama. The more you get out of the house and interact with other people, the more you will encounter different types of individuals, which should encourage you not to isolate yourself from the world.

Engaging in face-to-face communication with others will activate certain hormones that relieve stress and help you to feel calm and safe. When you are experiencing negative emotions, having a quick, simple chat with someone can get your mind off of things as well as help you to relax. Keeping strong and healthy relationships is vital to living a productive, effective, healthy, and peaceful lifestyle, so continue to seek out new positive connections. When you finally take the time to truly interact with other people, you will begin to see just

how lonely you really were, you got so used to that feeling, that it became natural to you. It is good for the spirit to spend time with those that love and care for you, because everyone needs to feel as if they have that loving, trusting support system.

Social Skills

In order to enhance your social skills, you are going to need to work on your communication skills, your interaction with others, and getting yourself out of that comfort zone. Make it part of your schedule so that you are spending at least an hour per week in some type of social setting where you can interact and communicate with strangers. If you do not have a place that you prefer, Karaoke is a great way to meet other people who are just letting loose and having a good time without any judgment. Going to enjoy the free jazz concerts in the park, which almost every city has during the summer, this is also a good way to meet and connect with others.

Your Social Intelligence

When you are in tune with your emotions, this can serve a huge purpose on the social level, which will ensure that you are consistently connecting with other people and the world. This will also ensure that you have the ability to tell the difference between someone being real and someone who is faking, you will also be able to tell if someone is really interested in you. When you have an actual conflict with someone, it can serve as an opportunity to get to know that person on a different level, if you learn to pay attention to everything, this will also allow you to possibly grow closer to them than you were before. Having disagreements are just a natural part of being a human being, and having to interact with other people; individuals will always have different opinions. Being socially aware enables you to recognize and interpret the nonverbal cues that people are constantly using to communicate

with you; it will help you to read how others are really feeling. It will also enable you to recognize when their emotional state changes from situation to situation, which will help you to establish somewhat of a baseline for them. When you are able to have a baseline on someone, this will make analyzing them easier for you to do, because now you are aware of some of their consistent body language. Learning to consistently follow the flow of the emotional responses of someone else, consist of the idea reciprocation, which requires that you also pay attention to the changes in your own emotional reactions. When you are consistent in paying attention to others, this does not take away from your own self-awareness, it actually builds it up tremendously. When you take that time to put that extra effort into really paying attention and being mindful of others, you will begin to gain deeper insight into your own emotional mindset and your values and beliefs. Take this into consideration, if you are always uncomfortable hearing others express certain views or how they feel, then you have now learned something important about yourself. This is something that you can use as a weapon in the future, whether is it to protect yourself or if it is to help you accurately read the non-verbal communication of others.

Emotionally Protected

You make sure to protect your emotions. You will not allow anyone to manipulate you in any way, because by being self-aware, mindful of how others use others for personal gain. Being emotionally intelligent will ensure that this type of mental manipulation will not work on you; you will see it coming and send signals not to even try it with you. This is a great skill to have because sometimes we can be so open when we meet new people, especially when falling in love, you have to know how to see when someone is trying to be deceitful. Even when it is something small, do not let it pass, file it in your mental Rolodex and make a note, this is going to serve as a huge factor in determining the character of this person. You may not actually let them know that you are aware of them trying to play with your mind, because this is a good way to gain more

information and really see how far they are planning to go with trying to manipulate you. Some people may want to sit back, watch and let the person think that they are getting away with this, while others may take the opposite approach and tell them immediately that they are not falling for the games. The key is to be self-aware and mindful so that you can be on the lookout for those horrible individuals who look for people that they can manipulate; sometimes, these people are the ones who are closest to us. When you are emotionally strong enough to protect yourself from your family members and closest friends, without coming off disrespectful, but very stern, this is when you have arrived.

Meeting New People

You will need to get out, make it a point to start practicing being social, engaging in conversations with people even when it makes you uncomfortable, because this is what will help you over time, believe it or not. That feeling of discomfort will push you to want to feel the opposite, so you will find yourself working quickly to develop those skills quickly so that you do not feel that way anymore. You can also attend social skill support groups; this is another option that is out there for those who may shy away from social settings or are just afraid to talk to strangers. This will definitely help you if you are having a difficult time communicating; they are great at providing support for those who are shy, feel awkward around others. They have activities and exercises that will help you not to feel so anxious or nervous in social situations, as well as assist you in working on your new skills. One of the best ways to improve social skills is to start talking to anyone that you get a chance to talk to, be open to making new friends, and you will probably find someone who understands your difficulties and struggles.

ake sure that you give yourself at least an hour so that you can an honest effort to initiate a conversation with as many strangers possible. You do not have to like

or be attracted to any of these people; the idea is to get yourself comfortable approaching strangers and striking up a random conversation. When you engage people who you do not know, this is a very effective communication tool, because it forces you to open up and use your curiosity to ask questions and learn things that you do not know. It will also improve your listening skills because the fact is that we tend to pay more attention to people we do not know while they are talking because we are trying to get facts about them.

Improving Communication Skills

If you do not have a good history of being comfortable communicating with anyone that you come into contact with, then we can fix that right now. You just need to start multiple random conversations with strangers throughout the day; this will build your conversational skills as well as your confidence. Consistent conversations and interactions with others will help you to become more effective in your communication skills. Be sure to remember important details when talking with someone; it will show that you were actually listening and paying attention to them as they speak. They will gain more respect for you because people can tell if someone is genuinely listening to them when they talk. Making and keeping eye contact, asking questions, and repeating facts back to them is also very vital. It shows that you are an active participant. Try to be mindful of your body language, because it will be telling a story itself, and will play a major role in the listening process.

There Is Only One Of You

Also, be careful not to get into the habit of comparing your progress with someone else and where they may be in their journey. This will damage the whole process of changing the way you think and living an effective lifestyle, so be self-aware, confident, and proud of who you are. If you have not yet found

your purpose or may not be sure of what you want in life, take the time to figure it out. It is ok to use the work ethic of another individual as a blueprint to success, just be careful not to judge yourself or assess your goals based on their accomplishments.

Energy

Making sure that your energy is in the right place is essential to living a peaceful life as well as ensuring that you have good health. A good way to get your energy in a good place is to take a moment to relax, reflect, and breathe deeply. When we are mindful and protect our emotional energy, we are able to live a healthier and more effective lifestyle. Emotions are valuable and can be very beneficial to us, and once we learn to process and cope with them correctly and effectively, this is when we begin to know who we really are on the inside. When you take the time to focus on your energy, this can benefit you in many ways, because will not allow anything negative to enter into your space.

Embrace New Things

Change begins with awareness and acceptance, as well as making sure to be assertive in your actions. Sometimes that means doing things in ways that you are not used to, so you are going to have to be honest with yourself and get ready for commitment. Determination, keeping an open mind, and be willing to try different things, will automatically begin to change a thing about you. Pick one behavior you want to change and work on it constantly until you are comfortable with it. Next, choose another chance to work on, and just keep repeating it over and over until you are into making a habit of embracing change. If you are looking for a change in someone, try to be an example of that change, instead of trying to change them, this is usually not successful at all. When others see that you are making an effort to change, they will be more likely to be open to changing as well. If we change ourselves, the tendencies around us would also change, along with the attitude of those around you. If you change

how you think, then that will affect how you feel and what actions you take. Do not fear the unknown, embrace change, invite new ideas into your world, take a chance in life, that door that you are afraid to walk through, may have your dreams on the other side.

Lose Your Routines

Do not allow yourself to go through life doing the same thing day after day, year after year, be that person who can say that they took chances in life, and made a habit to try new things. Get out of your routine of the way that you normally do things every day. You should even make a few changes to the way that you live your life, pick one day, and change up everything that you would usually. Get out of your comfort zone, break the mold, and crack the code, force yourself to do something that makes you uneasy. This will build character strength, self-worth, confidence, and courage. Anything that will take you away from feeling completely comfortable, and make yourself try something new; this will help you to build courage as well as confidence. You can make it a point to do something different during your lunch break at work, or even going out and getting a new haircut, one that you have never tried before! This will help you to become more open, welcome and embrace change and you will be excited about new challenges. Now that you have forced yourself to experience different things, you should be more open to changes and embrace challenges in your life. You will begin to look forward to trying new things and possibilities because now you welcome the opportunity to challenge yourself. Make an immediate decision to try something different; it does not have to be too drastic. It can be small, just make sure that you complete whatever it is. Do not be afraid to live outside of the box, or break the mold, crush the normal and always search for a deeper truth and an alternative answer to what you are looking into. Take pride in making new moves, being self-educated, do your research, so that you can find what best fits you and your lifestyle.

Lose Bad Habits & Get Healthy Ones

Begin With New Smaller Habits

While you are trying to change and become a more disciplined person, you are going to need to take on a new set of habits, which will encourage you to behave in a way that is conducive to your future and well-being. Depending on your level of self-discipline, you may need to start very slowly, because if you try to force something onto yourself too quickly, you will only reject it and go right back to those old habits. If you are trying to start working out, you can begin with something really small, like waking up and doing morning stretches, just to get your mind use to doing some kind of activity every morning, this is a great start. Next, you can begin to take daily walks and eventually incorporate more water into your diet until you are actually drinking at least one glass of water every day. These are going to be very small steps that you can take, without too much effort, and will not cause too much fear or anxiety. If you are trying to lose weight, you should take time to focus on healthier habits, make sure to educate yourself, incorporate water into your diet immediately, and start taking walks. This will get you started quickly, but will also ensure that you are not trying to do too much in the beginning, give yourself permission to take it slow. Just make sure that you are committed, so that you can add new things each week, to ensure an effective outcome in your weight loss journey.

Take Five Seconds

Whenever you get something in your mind and spirit, you should always try to make a physical move or action within the first five seconds without even thinking about it. Taking up too much time to think about whether you are going to do it or not, will only end up with you coming up with a way to talk yourself out of doing what needs to be done, which will also result in making excuses. If you just do it without thinking about it, then you do not have the time to talk yourself out of anything, and you will be able to focus on getting

it done.

Make Things Tough Or Annoying

When you are trying to stop a bad or unhealthy habit, there are many small things that you can do to assist yourself in this journey. You can add something horrible or uncomfortable to your habit, which may cause a delay or result in you having a change of mind. It is an effective way to deter yourself from doing something that you are trying not to do. It can also serve as an extra incentive to stop the habit that is not any good for you. A good example is a person who cannot stop biting their nails, they can use a substance with a horrible taste and smell, to coat their nails with, and this will usually deter them from doing it. They do not want to taste or smell that disgusting substance, so that will help to keep them from biting their nails as much as usual. You could be an individual who wants to quit smoking, take the pack of cigarettes and bury them in the back yard; this way, when you want one, you will actually have to dig up the pack for it. Many times, this will discourage you, because you are not going to want to go and dig up a hole in the yard, just go have a smoke. This is just one small tactic that could assist you in your journey to quit smoking. There are also many others that you can use along with this method.

Make It Easy

Make every attempt possible to assist yourself in whatever you are working on or trying to accomplish, keeping important objects or items close by, so that when you need them, they are already in a convenient location. This way, you do not have to think about it, use any extra energy to go and get it, because it is right there for you already. This tactic works great when you are beginning new because you will always be ready to take action thanks to the visual aid that you made sure to keep close by. If you are making an effort to start drinking more water, keeping a bottle of water everywhere that you go will

help you tremendously, because it is already right there when it is time for you to drink it. There will never be a need for you to go and buy water or pour it in a glass because you already have a bottle right next to you, which is a perfect example of making the transition more convenient for you. Keep a bottle of water at your desk at work, on your nightstand for when you wake up in the morning, and keep one in your gym bag, so it is there when you finish working out. Where ever you are going to be or planning to be, there should be a bottle of water nearby as well. This is going to assist you in getting better at drinking water, even if you are not a fan of it. Now we can discuss reading more books, using the same tactic works really well for this, because if you are sitting and waiting somewhere, and you have a book with you, you will pick it up and read some of it. Make it a point to keep a book at your desk, this way, when you have a few moments, you can read a few paragraphs in your book, and it will start to become a habit. Eventually, you will look forward to reading, instead of having to come up with ways that you to make yourself want to read anything at all. If you always keep one nearby you, there will not be a need to think about trying to buy one or check one out at the library. When you operate in this manner, you will be able to pull out your book anytime that you have spare time, this is a good habit to get into, it serves as an alternative to many other things that we do with our breaks.

Journaling

Life is like a big puzzle, and we get tips, hints, messages, and answers from all types of sources, and dreams happen to be one of them. Take the time to pay attention to your dreams, document them and you will start to see answers and clues in them. It might be a little strange at first, especially if you are not into writing things down, but you will begin to feel comfortable doing it quicker than you think. This may end up being something that you feel like you want to do on a consistent basis, as many people who have never written in a journal, end up being addicted to it after just a few days. It is a process, and there

is nothing like the feeling of freedom that you get when you write down how you feel about something. This is a very good habit to develop; I believe you should journal about everything, I am a huge fan of writing things down, due to the releasing process. It will also help you get from the habit of taking time to care for yourself, even if it just means taking a few minutes each day to do something small or silly for yourself, do it. Many people are not aware that writing in a journal will help you improve your self-awareness, self-confidence as well as relieve stress because writing them down releases them from heart, mind, and spirit. You are actually taking a step towards freeing yourself of whatever burdens or worries that you may have. One of the things that I have noticed about writing things down is that you feel a sense of accomplishment; it always seems as if you have done something important. Not to mention, you look forward to that feeling of freedom, so you will most likely return and write more things down. This is a very good way to clear your mind, as well as setting goals and making plans, writing things down makes them a visual aid and you will be more motivated to complete something when you have to look at it daily.

Power Of Belief

Positive thinking can most definitely assist with the healing process, and as long as you are mindful of the power within you to believe anything is possible, this is a very good start. It is also a great way to prepare your body for the journey of healing, possibly after a very serious surgery or illness. If you make it a practice to try to eat a more balanced and healthy diet, begin some form of meditation, you can develop a positive mindset that will help you navigate through life. Our minds and our bodies already work together as an all-star team, even during those times when we are not aware of it, so why not add more positivity to that. This connection with the mind and body is going to happen, whether we participate or not, so keep inserting plenty of positive affirmations, new perspectives, and new beliefs. Think of it like you are getting ready to build your family a brand new house, you paint, you put in new floors,

new carpet, new walls and then brand new ceilings. It is the same idea with your mind, body, and spirit. You can consistently add new positive, bright, important, and motivating messages to it daily. Your mind and body are going to believe all of those wonderful, positive and beautiful things that you have been feeding it, so now your body is speaking a more positive language without you even realizing it. People will begin to ask why you are glowing or assuming that you have a new love or a new job because the joy will be all over you and your energy has changed. The same way that we can do ourselves harm with the way that we live and eat can also do our body some extremely good, which can create positive outcomes towards our steps in healing. With the power of your mind, you are able to convince your body that it has the ability to prevent and heal illness and diseases. The next step is that you actually believe in what you are telling your body, the power of belief is very real. By being and thinking positive, you can create the outcome that you actually want, the last thing that you want to do is, to sit and wait for someone or something to come and give you an opportunity, you must have the type of mindset that will go out and create opportunities for yourself. Eventually, all of those things that you have thought about will start to come to pass and become a reality, as long as you continue to believe. Once you begin to view and think of yourself in a different way, this is when you will start to see different types of people, positive results and great outcomes in your life. Make it a habit to confirm positive qualities about yourself, say them out loud, and you can even add this in with your morning stretching routine every day. The things that you genuinely believe about yourself can actually predict a positive outcome for you and your future. It just takes consistency in taking the necessary steps in order to achieve your goal. The way you think to look at yourself and how much you believe that you can actually achieve something will definitely have an impact on your ability to succeed. Most of the time, you will be the only one who believes in yourself, because no one else will, many times, others might try to stop or deter you from going after whatever it is that you want. You may begin to see that certain people do not want you to make it because they believe that you will never amount to anything themselves. Make it a point to be that self-fulfilling type of person,

continue to predict great things for yourself, your life and your family, which will be a powerful tool to have. This is where you really need to have confidence in yourself as well as your ability to achieve your goals. This is going to be that thing that you hold onto when things get difficult for you. The ability to increase your self-belief and create more and more positive images to place into your mind and spirit is going to get stronger and stronger.

Feeling Each Emotion

As a child, you probably were told not to show or express emotions; many times, we were taught that this was not acceptable behavior, and would usually suffer consequences by showing these feelings. We want to erase those lessons and acknowledge the fact that emotions are natural, and so are the reactions that we have to them. You need to give yourself permission to delete all of that information from your childhood so that you can reframe and adjust your mind. The first step is always to be aware and allow yourself to feel the emotion. The key is to learn to control your reactions to the emotions that you are having at that moment. Just remember to identify exactly what you are feeling, which will slowly take power away from the emotion and allow you time to process what you are feeling. This helps in terms of being in control of the way that you react to difficult or stressful situations.

Do Not Try to Control Your Emotions

The most important part of processing difficult emotions is to stop trying to control them, but acknowledge them and feel them at that moment. You cannot control your emotions, but you can master them and learn how to control your reactions and responses to them. When you are aware of the fact that you have something that you need to do, this does not mean that you will actually do

it, especially if something stressful happens in your life, this can override your best intentions. When you are trying to make a permanent change in your own behavior, one of the first lessons that you need to learn is how to deal with and control that immediate, unexpected pressure and stress. This will ensure that you are able to remain emotionally aware and calm.

Self-Compassion

You have to be able to forgive yourself and be compassionate with yourself when you make a mistake or do something that was wrong. Everyone makes mistakes; we are just going to have to be patient and concentrate on what is positive about whatever the mishap was. It is not healthy for you to judge yourself too harshly, beat yourself down, or lose faith in yourself because there is always a brighter side to things. When you are good at showing self-compassion, it becomes natural for you to be compassionate towards other people in the world. When you are too hard on yourself, it can be very damaging to your spirit, self-esteem, and your confidence, which will cause you to develop a harder exterior.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of actively and purposely focusing your mind on what is taking place at the present moment, seeing it for exactly what it is, and not reacting emotionally out of control. The act of being mindful will assist you in shifting your attention to something positive or something that is not so bad about the situation. Having the ability to be the one who is calm and focused will also strengthen your self-awareness because you become more confident in your ability to handle difficult situations each time you experience something. If you are overwhelmed by stress, anger, and sadness, you are not going to be able to think clearly or make a healthy and rational decision. There are so many people dealing with everyday life and relationships, which are not

able to make clear and healthy decisions, due to the fact that they are aware what they need to do to control their emotional reactions. You should be mindful and aware of the way that your past experiences affect your actions today, knowing this can help you deal with people in a more constructive way. You need to schedule a time to hang out with friends and family, if you do not get to do this much, you need to make time for this. Being mindful will bring awareness to the painful emotions that force you to become self-judgmental and self-criticizing, which is the best time to remind yourself that you need self-compassion. This can help to break you out of that self-destructive cycle of telling yourself negative and hurtful things about yourself. If you are mindful of these things, you will keep yourself change your thinking so that you will not allow those negative thoughts, and they repeat themselves over and over. This can lead to a long road of depression, anxiety, and insecurity, which usually will lead to a lifetime habit of telling yourself those negative things. Mindfulness is also the key to living in the present moment, which is you forcing yourself to focus on that moment in time. It takes some practice, but just like any form of exercise, over time, it will become easier and will not feel like work at all, it will feel natural for you. When you get together with people you care about and share a few laughs, memories and even goals, this can refresh you and get your mind back on the right track. It is always a good idea to have your support system in place so that you can turn to them in times of need, and make sure that you are always available to help them whenever you can. Do not fall into the habit of thinking that you can handle everything by yourself, this is not healthy and it also promotes isolation, so gets help when you need to. Make sure there is someone that you feel that you can trust and who you feel comfortable with, this will make it easier for you to actually go to them for assistance when you need it. Being mindful is bringing your awareness and attention to the present moment and accepting how you may be feeling at that moment. This can assist us in decreasing stress. It is also a key to being a better leader, if you can change your mindset, your behavior and your employees and partners will follow. The act of being mindful allows us to distinguish between the things that we can change and the things that we are not able to change. An individual can be aware that if

something heavy falls on their foot, they are able to remove it, but cannot change the pain that it caused them. You may not be able to change what happened at that moment, but accept it and make a decision on how to handle it. This may not even temporarily ease the pain, but the fact that they are aware that they cannot change it is a part of being mindful.

Relationship Management

Working well with others usually begins with having emotional awareness and having the ability to recognize and understand what others may be going through or how they are feeling at that moment. In order to be effective in managing relationships, you need to be able to handle yourself in difficult situations and have the ability to understand and be compassionate when someone has hurt you. This is not an easy thing to do, but it comes with emotional maturity, which is necessary in order to find peace in many situations. When you become emotionally aware, you will be able to effectively develop additional social skills, which will enhance all of your relationships, making them more effective and fulfilling. When you have a good idea of how to manage your stress, this will be important in terms of gaining or improving your emotional intelligence. Your ability to manage your emotions will depend on the things that you endured in the early part of your life. If you were loved, nurtured, cared for, and protected, then you will most likely be more stable and feel as you are worthy and have value. For those who were neglected and or abused during infancy and throughout their childhood, they are the ones who consistently display negative emotions. Many times, when an individual has been raised in a somewhat normal home during their childhood, they will be better at handling themselves in difficult situations, as opposed to someone who has had a life full of abuse, they explode quicker. When you have the ability to control those sudden impulses, urges, and strong temptations, it builds up the strength that helps you manage your emotions.

Stay Independent in Relationships

Do not allow yourself to be dependent on anyone else for your basic needs, this is unhealthy, and it will eventually cause you many problems, and damage your self-esteem and your confidence. You need to be aware of who you are so that you are not in danger of becoming emotionally insecure. This will ensure that you do not consistently depend on others for our basic needs. Not everyone is a nice person who is willing to do things to help others; many people have an agenda. Be mindful that codependency can become addicting, so be careful when starting to date someone new, pay attention to the things that you allow them to do for you. It can even be cute and make you feel special to allow yourself to depend on a new partner, especially if we are normally independent, organized, and self-sufficient. It can make you feel as if you are letting go and being somewhat free, but if you are not mindful and aware, you may be dealing with a dominant and controlling personality. They will not see things that same way that you do, they are probably keeping tabs on everything they have done, and will soon be expecting something in return. This person may not be willing to turn off what they see as their control over you, because they feel it is their right to do whatever they see fit. When you decide that you have had enough of what may be a game to you, they are going to take it as a personal attack, because their ego is in full effect. This is why I say not to even get yourself caught up into allowing yourself to be taken care of unless you are aware and ready to deal with all that may come with that. Many people feel that if they take care of you, they have the right to have to say over your life, they think that they control you and will consistently tell you what to do and how to live. When one person depends on the other too much in the relationship, things are going to crash and burn, which is going to eventually destroy the love and it will become unhealthy and toxic.

ower Of Choice

Learn to defeat those different fears using the courage that you have inside of

Yourself, be aware that you are able to accomplish anything that you put your mind to. When you remain focused, work hard, and persist, you will eventually see a positive outcome. When you face your fears, you will automatically become open to trying new things, which will make you more self-aware as well as confident. This is one of the best ways to build up your confidence, is using your courage to defeat fears, and is open to welcome new challenges and ways of thinking. When you allow yourself to exist in a boring life, going through the same routines every day, this will result in your growth being paused. If you keep doing the same things, then you will never be able to experience anything different, so welcome change and keep an open mind. You also need to take responsibility for the choices that you make, even when you choose not to take action, this is still a choice. Be mindful of the type of choices that you have been making and figure out if they are working in harmony with your goals, your well-being, and your future. When you make it a habit of choosing things that are imperative to your success and achieving your goals, you will feel more like you are in charge, and the happier you will be. You can choose to look at every negative situation and find the positive or find a lesson, or a hint of something that you can use to get better, there is always something brighter to see in a dark situation. You just have to make a choice to look for the light in each situation, if you get rejected by someone, this can actually boost your creative ability, since you were forced to come up with new and original ideas. Many people who are successful have similar stories about rejection. They usually say that they heard NO hundreds of times, before finally getting that yes. If you look at those rejections in the correct perspective, you will find something that you can correct, make all over and create something even better than you had before. Most of the time, when a door closes on you, ten more have already opened up and are waiting for you to walk through them! This is why you can never give up on your dreams, continue to work, and realize that nothing good comes easy or overnight. All of those things that you are waiting for, they are waiting for you to show up and claim them, so keep dreaming and working.

Many times people will criticize you out of jealousy, being empty and miserable in the inside, or simply because they just do not want to see you do well. This is all ok, it is just a part of moving through life, so accept all of it with a smile, find what you can learn from it and keep moving. Do not allow it to get you off track, stay focused, and be mindful that there will always be someone coming at you with negativity or some form of criticism. Trying to avoid it will not do you any good; this will only serve as a distraction and can eventually prevent you from doing what you need to do. Be mindful of the way that you are spending your hard-earned money, educate yourself on some good investment options, nurture your spirit and purchase the kind of things that make you happy and feel good. Spend more of your precious time taking exciting, memorable vacations, eat more at your favorite restaurant, and take the time to go and hear as much live music as you can. We need to be mindful of the power that we have to make any choice that we want to, because life is all about making choices, and we can structure our lives with the ones that we make. Many times, people would rather focus on blaming their circumstances on someone else, rather than just admit they are responsible for the current life that they are living. Choose to operate as an effective, compassionate individual, believe that you are capable of making good choices, and display the ability to control certain outcomes in your life. When you choose to live this type of lifestyle, you will look for reasons to be happy and satisfied with life, instead of dwelling on all of the negative things in life.

Power In Saying No

Many people do not realize this, but the word NO is actually a complete sentence, which says volumes all by itself, so there does not need to be anything to go with it if you do not feel the need. It is very strong and can be used to make a point, take a stand or finally claim independence. Take a stand, make a promise to yourself to start doing those things that you really want to do, things that interest you and things that will serve as beneficial to your future

goals and plans. Start learning how to please yourself and not everyone else, it is time for a change. In terms of changing the way you think, you are going to have to start exercising complete control, which will show others that the new you has arrived and is here to stay. Improving your ability to say now is going to depend on your attitude, your determination and the habits that you currently have. You are going to need to recognize that this new habit of saying NO will only help you to get where you are going. Remember, other people are not the only ones that you will need to have the courage to say no to, that person in the mirror is the one that you will have to fight the most. Just remember not to mistake those things that feel good to you, for what is best for your health and your life overall. This will take much self-control and discipline, telling yourself no, when you have the urge or become tempted to do something that is not good for you. All you have to do is to make that choice to change your attitude, and you will begin to see that most of the things in your life will begin to change automatically. To work on becoming this type of individual, the first thing you can work on is to look for evidence that life is good each time something goes bad for you. Every time misfortune comes into your life, all you have to do is think of and focus on something that you really love, this will occupy your mind until the bad feelings pass. You will also learn to deal with confusion and other things in a very different way when you live your life in an effective mindful way. You have the inability to make sense of what is actually going on and look at the situation from a totally different perspective.

You Are Your Choices

Be aware of your physical and your mental health; this is vital to living a healthy life and being emotionally intelligent. You need to pay close attention and place extreme care into everything we allow into our minds, our body as well as our spirit. Anything that you are exposed to will have some kind of impact on your well-being, so pay attention to what type of environments and situations that you in. You have to make sure that those around

you understand that your privacy is to be respected, and nothing less will be tolerated. Remember, you are going to need to remind the person in the mirror this as well because they are the ones who will challenge you the most. At this point, you should only be in relationships that are healthy and where that person is encouraging you to grow within the relationship and outside of the relationship. Remember, choices, choices and more choices. You need to get in the habit of living your truth, speaking up for yourself and never denying your feelings again, even when it seems to make others feel bad. You should be taking care of you first, so being selfish in terms of letting go of your emotions and learning how to master them, is totally fine. If you have children, remember that they learn by example, so please make sure that you are laying down the correct blueprint for them. Do not be one of those hypocrites who tells their daughter not to let a man abuse them while you force her to witness you, allowing the man in your life to beat up on you. This same thing applies if you have a son if you tell him not to hit on any woman, but he watched his father abuse you for years, he is going to apply what he has seen. You must lead by example, show them what is truly right and wrong, what is acceptable behavior as human beings so that they have a chance to grow up and become a decent person. If you are in a toxic relationship with a partner who is abusive to you in front of your children, you need to remove yourself and your children from that toxic environment immediately.

Negative Emotions

Many people go through life, allowing their pain from the past to define them, determine their future, and actually take away their chances of living an effective life. When you have trouble getting over all of those horrible names you were called as a kid, you keep hearing those hurtful comments whenever you meet new people. This holds you in your own emotional prison of negativity, which ensures that you continue to dwell only on negative events, thoughts, and feelings. When you continue to Holding onto those negative

memories, it can definitely lead to mental health issues because you will continue to experience all of those negative emotions. You have to learn how to replace the negative thoughts with positive ones, this will take some time, but like everything else, if you are consistent, it will become easier for you to do. You should not get into the habit of thinking of something that made you miserable and allow it to remain in your spirit. When it enters into your mind, allow yourself to feel the emotion for a moment, do not get stuck there, remind yourself that you have made it through those times. Once you make a consistent effort to practice doing this, you will begin to talk yourself out of reacting negatively or harshly to many situations as well as other people.

Feelings and Actions

You need to be mindful of the fact that there is a difference between having a thought and experiencing a feeling, which may cause you to take action. Everyone has had some kind of horrible thoughts; this is normal; the key is to recognize that it does not mean that taking action is required. We have all had thoughts that are not that positive or beautiful, but we do not normally act on these thoughts in any kind of way. Many times, this is just a way for our brains to allow us to feel as we are getting quick revenge on someone who may have hurt us. We will always replace those negative thoughts and return to normal thinking where we are not imagining something bad or planning negative actions. Many times it can be difficult to control certain impulses because we do have emotions, but there is a difference between having a feeling and performing an action. When we are sad, this is only a feeling, but when you become withdrawn, this is an action, so usually one leads to the other. When we are angry, the aggression you display is a behavior, which is an action. There is a huge difference between yelling and screaming at someone when you are angry, then if you were to tell them in an assertive way how you feel and the fact that it is bothering you. Having the ability to be aware of your feelings and owning the fact that you could possibly have extreme rage towards someone you love helps

because now it does not control you. It is all about being mindful and making the right choices when you start to find yourself in that rage again. Having that self-awareness will enable you to know when it is time for you to take a step back, breathe, and get your mind together.

Speak On It

Let it be known how you feel. It is ok to say it loud and clear, especially if you have not been the type of person to speak your mind. This is a great way to start expressing your feelings! When you actually speak something out loud, not only does it put that out into the universe, it allows you to release all of that aggression that comes with not speaking your mind. You do not have to be rude, disrespectful, cocky, but let it out and it will only do you good in the long run, so let it out. When we learn to be mindful of negative emotions, control our reactions and responses, it helps us to become more resilient. We are not necessarily born with the natural ability to sift through our emotions, but we are taught how to ignore and hide them from caretakers and our parents. Speaking on your emotions will help to release and free you from feeling as if you are a prisoner to your own past, and allow you to live for the future.

Denial Is Not Healthy

Being mindful, open, honest, and willing to look at and accept whatever your reality is and be ok with it. Your situation or past experiences do not define who you are at the present moment or who you are going to become. You are not your struggles or your heartbreak. You are who you say that you are going to be, so make it sound good. Our past experiences do have some influence on how we think, who we grow into, and how we live, but you can change the course of your life if you choose to do so. Whatever you do, stay away from denial, do not try to act as if something never happened, this will only cause you more harm. Thinking in that way will keep you from being able

to open up and start a new thought process and learn different perspectives. You have to learn to face your pain without allowing it to control you because you have the power to change those inner thoughts. Do not fall into the habit of minimizing your pain and be careful not to get addicted to self-medicating and other unhealthy types of behavior.

Positive Replacements

When you have a horrible memory or a negative thought, you do not have to be held prisoner to those thoughts; you can choose to replace them with positive memories. This way, you are able to spend more time remembering those things instead of the things that make you feel angry or sad. Positive thinking is not about tricking yourself. It is more about changing your outlook to a different side of reality. You have the ability to reframe any situation and see the positive in what others may believe there is only negative. It can take a while to get used to the idea of being able to replace those negative thoughts, but it can be done with consistent practice and being determined to do so. If you can train your mind not to dwell for too long on negative thoughts about something in the past, which involves telling yourself that there are too many good things coming up to focus on that. Many times, if you just take the time to appreciate the small things that mean so much in your life, this will assist you in shifting those terrible thoughts into some kind of motivation to have a great day. Trying to exist in a positive manner, basically consists of looking for some good in every bad situation or environment. If you can master this skill, you will go a long way, and it will definitely get you through some really tough times in your life.

EMPATHY

BEING EMPATHETIC MEANS, you have the ability that is needed to recognize, understand, share, and actually care about how someone else is feeling. This is very important for all of our relationships because we all want to feel as if we are loved, respected and needed. People are conditioned to notice if you truly care about what they are saying and what they may be going through, and you can show this by listening to each word and making sure that you try to understand what they are saying. Show that you are active in the conversation by using your body language, making sure to have direct eye contact, and remember to ask questions as well as respond to them. Adjusting the tone of voice as the conversation changes show that you are interested in and listening to what is being said. When you are truly empathetic, people are able to feel that, so just be genuine, compassionate and understanding.

Love is a Choice

Some of the old school traditions suggest that love is a thing that happens to us because we are unable to control ourselves, which can be somewhat true, but making the choice to stay with someone and continue a relationship is yours and yours alone. This may not be as romantic as some people want it to be, but in reality, the key to being happy is having self-love, self-awareness, and choosing to continue loving your partner, once again making

the choice to continue to fight for the love that you have within your relationship. True love can sometimes be a matter of destiny, but making a decision to work hard to keep the relationship going, is not, it involves making a choice and sticking with it. When you continue to do what it takes to make things work, as time passes, you will notice that all of those weeks have now turned into years. Happiness in the relationship is something you have control over. Simply by choosing to communicate and be honest with your partner, this takes away many problems that exist for many. Taking the time to be mindful of what it really takes to be happy in a relationship, is a major key, along with controlling your own behavior.

Nurture Your Loving Relationships

Being blessed enough to make it to the final stages of life, it is not something that everyone gets to experience, so you want to make sure that you have people around who you love, trust and care for to spend your last days with. At this point in life, money in your bank, the career you held down, or anything else that you may have accomplished, will not matter to you at all, but having love and company will. Those who have been there to love you, fill your heart with joy, and making sure that you feel secure, safe, and satisfied, are what is important. As we go through our life, trying to accomplish goals and fulfill our dreams, we get pretty busy, which sometimes causes us to lose important time with those who we love. This can also result in us actually losing a few very important relationships because we are so focused on ourselves and our goals, we must be mindful and remember to find that balance. This way there is no chance at losing or hurting a very important, close, loving and healthy relationships with those who are vital to us when we reach the last chapter of our lives. No matter what you do, keep these relationships high priorities, focus on building, sustaining and keeping them healthy, so they will be there in your final days. And you want to be there for those that you love as well, being able to be that loving ear and heart to someone that you have cared for over the years does

a great deal for the spirit.

Admitting Fault

Being able to admit when you have done something that was wrong shows a sign of emotional maturity, and it is vital to maintaining any healthy relationship. If you are the type of person who constantly refuses to admit your wrongs, it is just going to show the people who are around you who you truly are, as well as paint you in deceptive light. The most effective way to handle it is to be honest, own whatever it is, apologize and move on. Without realizing it, this is another way that you are releasing stress from your body. Anytime that you hold something inside, keep secrets or live in a deceitful way, it can be very harmful to your health in the long run. Eventually, you are going to be the person that no one wants to be around, so they will only interact with you when they really need or have to. You are going to become consistently irritated with everything and everyone, simply because you are not being honest with yourself or anyone else. It can indeed be very difficult, humiliating or and even embarrassing when you need to make an admission of something you have done wrong, but it needs to get done, so just do it. If you take a moment to think about it, you will realize that there is no need to go around feeling like you fight to prove your point, if you just admit what you have done.

We Are All Wrong Sometimes

If you are one of those people who always feel the need to write about something, you need a really quick wake up call, because that is not reality, and it is also a way to stunt your learning process. First of all, you do not even realize how much pressure you are putting upon yourself, because it is just not possible to be right in every situation or circumstance that you encounter. When you live your life putting that type of weight on your shoulders, you are putting a limit on how peaceful and healthy your life can actually be. Take a

moment to decide if you would rather be right or if you would much rather be happy, the obvious choice should be happy, but if you are addicted to being stubborn, then this will not change.

Active Listening

Being an empathic listener can prove to be powerful and beneficial to you and the other person, this will enable you to be able to fully understand them, be involved in the conversation both emotionally and intellectually. Empathic listening means that you are listening with your eyes, ears, and heart while making sure to listen with no intention to reply, judge, convince, or manipulate the situation. They only need for you to listen, pay attention, care, and finally just to UNDERSTAND! Listening comes naturally to someone who is empathetic, but there are those who need to try and practice at being better listeners because many times we only listen halfway to the person who is talking to us unless they say something that is interesting or beneficial to us. When you actually take the time to become a better listener, it can be beneficial to both you and them.

Being A Good Leader

As leaders, we are inspiring others with a vision that we have based on our task at hand, so the more clear you are about your vision, and your mission, the more authentic you will be in your delivery and the more people you will have that will feel a natural connection to your message. You can motivate others with your goals when you are constantly working on your goals, talking about your goals, and living in a life that pertains to your goals. It should show in everything that you do that you are on some sort of mission to accomplish a dream or goal that you want. One of the best ways to figure out how to be a better leader is to continue to come up with great ideas about how to assist others and improve the world. These are the things that we wish others

would do, so just be what you would love for everyone else to be. When others notice that everything that you are connected to has to do with your goals and your dreams, you are automatically going to inspire and motivate others around you. They will say things like, “every time I see or talk to you, you say you are working towards a goal.” These are the types of comments that you want to hear from people because they will keep you motivated and on the right track. Having perseverance, which is simply the ability to keep going no matter how long it takes or how hard it is, just keep working to achieve your goals and continue to be productive. You also need to have ambition, which is simply the desire to achieve your goal. In addition to your ambition, you need to be able to force yourself to put in that extra effort sometimes. Great leaders always have great social skills, because most of the time, they are excellent communicators who know how to get others motivated and ready to go. They are able to convince others to have a good day; even if they cannot see one insight, they have the skills to find the good in every situation. Leaders who handle and carry themselves accordingly, do not waste their effort on verbally attacking others, making decisions when they are angry, or passing judgment. Effective leaders always stand on their values and are very consistent in coming up with better ways to motivate and inspire others. A true leader stays ready to receive both good and bad news because they are able to manage their emotions. Having good social skills is also helpful when it comes to trying to manage and resolving conflicts between others; they are usually very quick thinkers with the ability to calm down a heated situation. They are not comfortable leaving things unresolved, and they always figure out a way to show others a way to get things accomplished. Leaders are very good at setting examples by their work ethic. When you see your boss working just as hard or even harder than you, it makes you want to work even harder. Most of the great leaders will never let their temper get the best of them. They will always keep it in control, no matter what the issue is at hand. The leader who is trusted by their entire staff remains easily accessible to all of them, always shows understanding and compassion. This is the one who will have the best team. In order to be an effective leader, one should have a solid understanding of how their actions affect the people around

them and vice versa. Being able to truly relate to others, the higher the success rate will be, and that is not only financially, but I am also talking about success as an effective, loving human being. Those individuals who are truly self-aware, have the ability to empathize with others, effectively communicate and read the cues of people are considered to be successful in my book.

Praise & Motivate Your Team

As a leader, when you take the time to show others that you not only notice their work but appreciate and love it, this can make a huge difference in the way that those who you are leading will respond to you. Not only will they feel that you truly appreciate them, but they will also be inspired and motivated to keep working to get better at whatever it is that they are doing. When you feel good about yourself and make sure that you are taking good care of yourself, it comes naturally for you to have a love for others. You automatically nurture and inspire others without having to think about it or work on it. A really good leader has the ability to make others feel like the project that they are working on is actually worth all of the sweat. When you are a leader, make sure that your light is shining at all times, people should look at you and just smell inspiration, love, motivation, and compassion. Being a leader means that you are living in your truth, walking in your purpose, and helping others to do the same. Many times in life, we tend to keep our deepest desires from most of those that we know and love, which does not seem to make much sense. There is one thing that you have dreamed of and fantasized about for years, but you have never told anyone or expressed any interest in the subject at all. When you have that type of strong desire, do not allow yourself to place it on the back burner for now, get up and go for what you want in life. Do not listen to those negative voices that tell you not to go for it, or that you will not be able to attain a certain thing, trust yourself. Take some time Figure out what has been keeping you from making that first move in order for you to make this a reality. Many times, especially as leaders, we do not have the appropriate time to focus on our own dreams and desires, because we are usually helping others to stay motivated to achieve their goals. It is imperative that you learn to find that balance, helping others is great,

but do not lose yourself in the process.

Live Your Truth & Shine

Being a leader, you need to realize that no one ever died taking a moment to focus on themselves; you have got to reflect and make time for some extreme self-care. You will be the one who reminds everyone that mistakes and failures are only lessons, which show us what road not to travel down the next time we attempt something. Inspire your team not to decrease opportunities, and to embrace the feelings of joy, which comes from using our own unique talents, gifts, and skills. Letting your light shine will be confirmed to those who already look to you for inspiration because this will assure them that they have made the correct decision to follow you. God meant for each of us to walk within our purpose. He also gave all of us a form of creativity, which some of us just have not managed to tap into yet.

From the time we are children, we are surrounded by an invisible structure, referred to as culture or environment, which is where we get our ideas on how to navigate through life and the world. If someone grows up in a structure of the personality which is focused on strength and weakness, that is the only way that they will be able to view the people that they come into contact with. When they come into contact with a homeless person who may be asking for change, they immediately think that person is a loser, which many times they actually express out loud. One of the most common statements that rude people say to homeless people is, "get a job," I have heard that hundreds of times as if that person really chooses to live that way. The next second person in this example grew up in a structure where the focus was needy and the fortunate, this is the only way that they view everyone they meet. When they interact with someone who is homeless, they will give that person money, show them compassion and understanding as well as with the best for them. Many times,

following the interaction with that person, they will continue to feel bad while asking themselves how we, as a society, can fail so many people. These individuals actually spend a lot of their time thinking about the well-being of others, which causes them to spend a good part of their lives, helping the less fortunate. The bottom line is, you have no idea what led someone to the point where they live and sleeping on the streets, so judging them is pointless if you do not want to help them, just move on. We only know what we were exposed to and taught, until we actually go out and learn things on our own, experience the world, and begin to develop our own perspectives and beliefs, we are socially immature. This is why is so important to become self-aware, do your research about things, read books, educate yourself so that you can come to your own sensible conclusion about life. This needs to happen without the influence or opinions of anyone else. For each of these individuals, their emotions are the tools that they use to interact with others. The first one uses anger and aggression all of the time because he believes that makes him seem strong. The second one seems to use understanding and compassion as their main tool, which allows them to be a giving type of person. It is all about the way each person perceives the world and how they need to move around in it, the angry one will always try to prove his strength, while the compassionate one will consistently be looking to help those who are less fortunate.

The master of emotions is someone who can destroy that invisible structure around them and develop a diverse set of ideas and perspectives, which will help them to look at the same scenario in different ways. This type of person would be a mixture of the two above, which would allow switching from one to the other. Taking a moment to try and see all of the potential realities that may exist, looking at a homeless man and realizing that he may be out there due to lack of support or failure of the system. He may actually not be on drugs, worthless or lazy. He could really be down on his luck, with no one to help him out. Learn to be mindful, take a moment to think before you look down on someone, you have no idea of the road that they are traveling.

Being a master, you will automatically come up with new ways to view things and interact with people. This is because you always take a moment to listen, show compassion, and help anyone that you can. Just by listening, you have now given yourself a new way of perceiving what is in front of you, allowing you to develop a new layer of understanding, even when you do not agree with the point of view. When you are open to new ideas and perspectives, this is a great way to be consistent in working on the skill of mastering your emotions. When you are able to truly see things in a different way than you ever have, you will gain a clear and true understanding of the way that the world works.

Lead By Example

You are supposed to be that motivation or inspiration for someone your team because most people do not welcome change, so you will have to be the image of welcoming changes and new things. We expect leaders to know exactly what to do and how to motivate to get them going, we all need to learn to place ourselves in the role of a leader at one time or another in life. You should consistently be willing to appear in the way you expect your team and others to look.

Forgiveness

When you can find it in your heart to forgive someone, just remember that it really for you in the long run, because you will be taking your power back from them. When someone hurts you, they automatically take power over you, because what they have done has taken control of your emotions. You need to forgive them so that you can learn to manage the reactions that you are having to all of those negative emotions. After you finally find yourself in a place where you feel that you are ready to truly forgive, this is when you should continue your contact with this person, and not a minute before. You should have already taken the time to figure out if you are ready to forgive that person

entirely and completely. This is something that you need to do before you make that decision to interact with them in any way. You must be willing to let go of the past, make an honest effort not to bring up old situations during future disagreements. This will show that you are truly moving forward, which can be very difficult, so be honest with yourself about when you are ready for this. Telling someone that you forgive them, is easier said than done because you are going to have to be able to show that with your actions. You can say that, but if you are showing them that you are out for revenge, still angry or hurting, there is going to be conflict. They are going to feel that you are not over what they have done; this is the reason you need to wait until you are ready to forgive them completely. You cannot halfway forgive someone; if you are going to forgive, you must dig deep and find something inside of yourself that will help you move forward. Like I stated earlier, none of this is easy, but if you are determined to make things work out, it is well worth all of the hard work and effort. Trying to figure out how to completely forgive and really mean it can be more challenging than most people realize because you have to be in the presence of someone who hurt you, which is not easy to do. In the end, you will be the one to benefit from forgiveness, because it will allow you to feel free. Basically, you will not be holding on to those negative emotions and feelings that caused you to feel that way in the first place. Anger and resentment, which also cause stress, are very damaging to your health as well as cause you to have a negative effect on others, even when you do not realize it. So when you learn to truly and deeply forgive, you actually take another step towards freeing your soul.

Your Way Only

This is the type of thinking that will destroy relationships, tear down trust, and allows your ego to interfere with controlling the narrative of what is taking place. It actually makes you believe that your ideas, thoughts, and values are better than anyone else that you know and how you are pretty much superior to others. Thinking this way can actually harm you because

without you realizing it, you can become addicted to behaving in this manner, and permanently live with that reality. When you think this way, your judgmental, your ego is out of control, and it causes you to be less approachable, which usually results in minimal conversations. You have convinced yourself that no one can do anything better than you, while you do not even realize that you are not being a good team player at all. When you try to convince everyone else that you are a team player, they will laugh behind your back, because your actions show them something totally different. If you are trying to become more empathetic towards others, you will need to change a few habits immediately, because actions speak louder than words.

Being Defensive

If this is your consistent reaction when someone calls you out or ask a question that you do not like, then you need to take a long look at yourself. When you know that you have made a mistake, or done something wrong, you need to own it instead of making excuses or placing the blame on other people. When you get into the habit of blaming others, it can be difficult to stop yourself, because just like lying, it can become dangerous and very addictive. You should make it a point to work on yourself, take the time to self-reflect and learn to take responsibility for your actions, instead of choosing to blame someone else.

Body Language

Being less aggressive when someone has upset you, is all a part of being self-aware and having the ability to control your emotional responses. Try to be mindful of the way that you are presenting yourself and what you are saying through your body language. People can listen to your words, but if they are emotionally mature and intelligent, they will be able to read your non-verbal cues, so make sure that you are on point. Your body also speaks to you when it is in need of nutrition, proper rest, water, love, and attention, so you need to listen

to what your body says. Your body will eventually scream really loud when you do not listen, so tune in and hear it when it is crying out for help or attention. This is the only way that you will be able to respond accordingly, and live a healthier lifestyle. One of the things our body talks about is the way we are treating it and how it feels, most of the time we do not listen until it is yelling uncontrollably, that it is impossible for us to continue to ignore. Brush up on your listening skills so that you can hear what your body is saying to you when it begins to speak directly about the care, attention, and possibly specific healing that needs to take place. Get in harmony with your body and develop a close relationship with it so that it does not have to scream or cause a dramatic scene to get your attention anymore.

Stereotyping

You want to stay away from this because it can be a form of generalizing, which is used to put people into boxes, assume many things about them and their ideas. Many people have a difficult time getting past certain stereotypes because they have been made to believe that those are accurate descriptions of people out in this world. Take the time to get to know someone for who they are. This will provide way more information about them than those things that you spent time assuming were true. We have all been in a situation where someone has taken something out on us because of something someone else has done, this is not a good feeling, so just remember that before you do the same to another person.

Imagine It Was You

When you can exercise the ability to put yourself in the place or position of someone else, and understand what they may be going through, it is a great way to just bring you back into the space of being human. Use this tool to help you deal with situations that are not that easy to deal with. It can also assist

in increasing your understanding and your sensibility towards others. When you are mindful of your actions and practice this on a regular basis, you will be quicker to show compassion and understanding, which will keep you from rushing to judgment on others. This usually comes naturally for many of us when we hear something bad has happened to someone; we automatically begin to imagine what we would if we were in that situation. Once again, it can keep you from judging someone or something too quickly and give yourself time to think for a moment.

Showing Personal Integrity

Personal integrity generates trust and shows people that they can indeed count on you keeping your word, commitments, and promises, and being honest is a large part of that. Integrity includes but goes beyond honesty. Having integrity also means that you treat everyone by the same set of principles, and that will automatically improve the way people will come to trust you. They may not at first appreciate the honest confrontations that this level of integrity might generate, but they will respect it in the long run.

Being confrontational can sometimes take a great deal of courage, and many people would prefer to find an easier way than to deal directly with belittling and criticizing, betrayal, and participating in ineffective and negative talk about each other.

But when you are honest and open and kind to them, show them that you care enough to confront them, and eventually, this will build a loving and trusting relationship.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

STRESS

Stress is the way that your body responds to something that it may perceive to be harmful to you. If there is a perceived threat, you will experience a chemical reaction that will activate an automatic defensive response. This is what helps to prevent you from getting sick or contracting a disease. When stress is left untreated, it can have effects on you physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally. It may cause you to constantly feel tired, moody and irritable and you might actually begin to get headaches. It will definitely have a role in the way that your body reacts as well as how it speaks to those around you. Fear of the unknown, not being in control of their own lives, can cause someone an extreme amount of stress. These individuals usually live with constant anxiety due to the fact that they feel feeling like they are not the driver on the road that they are traveling. Stress has a very different effect on all of us, there is not any specific way to define or describe it, nor is there ever been a perfect way to deal with it, just ways to manage it. One of the first steps you can take is to gain a sense of self-control, which will help you to remain focused on doing what is necessary to move forward in your life. When you consistently keep your mind on what needs to be done, what is important and what you need to do to get things accomplished, it helps to keep the stress levels very low. Make sure you set personal boundaries and limits, which you do not allow anyone to cross, even yourself, this is definite protection against daily stress. You do not want to be

one of those individuals with stress levels that are so high that they are not able to function on a normal level in order to live a healthy life. When you are unable to manage your emotions, there is a good chance that you are probably not managing your stress either, which will eventually lead to serious health problems. When stress is left unmanaged or uncontrolled, it can raise up your blood pressure, slow down your immune system, and it will also increase the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Being under a constant amount of stress can make you look much older than you actually are because it will speed up the aging process. In order to begin to improve your emotional intelligence, is making sure that you learn how to manage your emotions as well as your stress. If you constantly have emotions that are out of control and consistently feeling stressed out, this will also take a toll on your mental health, which will ensure that you are vulnerable to anxiety and depression.

Share Your Story With Others

A great way to release stress and built-up shame or guilt is to just let it all out, talk about it with someone, and you will notice the weight that has lifted off of your shoulders. There is an old saying which goes, “do not let those secrets live in your spirit,” this is so true because without you realizing it, they will slowly kill you and all of your dreams. You are not doing any good to yourself or anyone else by holding onto all of those old secrets, just let them go and watch how free you feel. Do not think about it, just let it go, do not get caught up in telling the story a certain way, do not try to dress it up, just tell the story so that it is not in your mind and heart anymore. Give it somewhere else to reside. This way, you are not responsible for taking care of it, allowing it to live rent-free within your body; it is time for it to move on. Not to mention, this can also help you to gain the trust of someone new because when you open up yourself and share some of your most intimate feelings with someone, they begin to feel safe with you. This just means to share some of your dreams, goals, fears, and a few other details showing that you can be trusted, which in turn, the

other person will be comfortable sharing more of themselves, which will open up a deeper conversation. After that, it all good now because you now have a new person that you can communicate with and practice being more empathetic without any judgment. Not only are you supporting your mind and body by releasing that toxic stress, but you are also working on your communication and social skills.

Stretching and Exercise

Make sure that you take a few moments each morning to get your blood flowing and get the energy up. It will improve your mood and attitude throughout your day. Taking the time to exercise, moving or playing around, dancing and being active, these are the kinds of things that we can all do, they are all-natural and costs us nothing. Exercising is also known to increase physical, mental, and spiritual health and is an excellent way to combat stress. It is also a great way to restore your spirit, go outside and take advantage of the beautiful nature that is there for all of us to enjoy, take a few moments to find something to be thankful for. If you are not really into exercising that much, you really want to make sure that you take ten minutes every morning to do your stretches, this will help you to start your day off right, as well as get your blood flowing.

Sleep and Water

When people do not get enough sleep, they are usually stuck in their negative thinking, which always affects their ability to focus on positive things, so many times, they are very aggressive and disrespectful to others. They also tend to engage in the more negative type of conversations, where they are making it a point to put someone else down or talk bad about something that someone else has done. Try to get at least six hours of solid sleep each night, I know that everyone says eight, but for many people, that is just not a reality, so

get at least six hours of good rest. Your body will not only thank you for this rest, but it will also repay you with energy and overall good health. When you do not get enough sleep, it is very bad for your immune system, stress level, mood, and physical health. When you get the proper amount of sleep, your body is quicker to recover from injuries and illnesses, and it also helps to speed up the recovery process after surgery. There is something really simple that we all can do, which takes no extra energy or thinking, just drink plenty of water and get a good amount of rest each night. If you are not into drinking water, it is a good idea to get it out of the way in the morning during your stretching and meditation. Make sure to drink at least one bottle per day, even if you claim to hate water, learn to love what it can do for you and how natural it is.

Release Negative Energy

The first thing you need to do is set up an environment where you can control the energy level as well as the outcome. This way, you can begin to build that road towards living a peaceful life. You should have a special space that you can go and get rid of any negative energy that you may have at that moment, a private room, a corner, or even your backyard will work. You just want to make sure that you are consistent with this so that your mind will get used to doing it, this will automatically become a way that you relieve stress and release negative energy. Dancing, listening to music and laughing, can all help you to let go of negative thoughts and energy, because you will be focused on what you are doing at the time. These activities will also refresh you and help you to begin looking at life with a new perspective.

Meditation

Meditation can help to remove the stress while inserting positivity, relaxation, and peace into your life. You can use it to assist you in keeping all of your emotions in balance, as well as keeping allowing you to react

to situations and people in a much calmer manner. The more you can quiet your fast-moving brain, the more you will be in tune with your emotions and the effects that they have on you. Meditation is always a great way to practice this; just relax and try to keep your mind blank for as long as you can. You want to get yourself into the habit of meditating, which means that you need to schedule a time for it in your busy day. A good time is to get it out of the way in the morning, along with your stretches and prayers. Practice this a few times per day, sitting with yourself in a quiet space for five minutes, continue this daily, and it will become a habit for you. From now on, every time you take your break at work, find a place that you can go and practice this, once you get used to doing this, you not feel right without doing it, will begin to become a necessity for you. There are many different types and levels of meditation, so you do not have to become an expert, or stress trying to figure out how to do it correctly. Just take the time to focus on relaxing and really deep breathing; this is a great way to get your mind trained on what to think about. Be aware that there are many different types of ways that you can meditate, so you should find the kind that feels right for you, fits your lifestyle and one that you actually like doing. You are getting ready to begin something that will last for the rest of your life because you have committed to improving your mind, body, and spirit.

Read Daily

Research has shown that reading and success are always connected, so If you are someone who makes it a point to take the time to read on a regular basis, you probably have less stress than most of your friends, increase your relaxation in order for you to sleep better at night, it will also ensure that you continue to expand your knowledge. The level at which you concentrate is going to become much deeper. You will gain better writing skills, and your confidence level will increase because you are constantly learning new facts. When you keep your brain active, constantly challenging and stimulating it, this can disrupt or possibly prevent the process of diseases like Alzheimer’s and Dementia. When

you are consistent in using your brain, you will ensure that it will not lose any of the power it has, thanks to staying active. The brain is a muscle, and you should make sure to use it as much as you can in order to keep it strong. The same way you do work out sessions in order to keep your other muscles strong, take this same approach with your brain, I actually am into doing puzzles and mental quizzes to help keep my mind sharp. When you are a consistent reader, you are constantly learning new words, which makes your vocabulary even stronger, which enhances your ability to articulate well enough to navigate your way through a conversation with anyone.

Pause

Taking a moment to slow down when you experience anger or other strong emotions, is a great way to get your mind together and figure out why you have affected the way that you are. Keep in mind that whatever the situation is, you can always re-frame your thinking and see it differently and make a rational decision as to how you are going to react to it. Sometimes, you just need to take a moment and appreciate yourself, thank yourself, give some extra love to yourself and praise all of the accomplishments that you have made. Make this a habit, taking a moment to pause and gather your thoughts. It is not always about being in negative situations; sometimes, you just need to pause and re-start.

Schedule Time to Worry and Stress

There are so many people in this world who just cannot seem to live without stressing or worrying about something; I believe it is another form of addiction. A person can read a thousand self-help books, go to hundreds of seminars, watch videos, but will not stop worrying because it is just their personality. That is ok, I have come up with a way to allow you to get all of that out in a healthy and interesting type of way, which means that you will schedule a time to worry from now on. This can be very effective for those individuals

who will create something to worry about if they do not have something that is justified to them. We all know someone who has been told hundreds of not to worry, but they will continue and telling them that usually causes them more stress. When someone has an addiction to worrying, you can come up with ways to deal with that; it is all a part of living your truth. This is how you need to work this out, schedule about fifteen minutes every day and use this time to focus on everything that you need to or are currently worrying about, all of your problems, the issues of your friends, your job, finances, the children and whatever else you can come up with to worry about. These fifteen minutes are going to become very important to you, as you will become used to doing this, so now you will find yourself regularly listing things to worry about during your scheduled time. The plan is, to be able to tell yourself that now is not the time to think of whatever is causing you to worry, remind yourself that you can get to that in the morning at the time that you already have set aside. This is something that you need to do every day, even if you feel you do not have to if you have a history of constant and chronic worrying than this will help you out. It is all about forming a new habit, and giving yourself as many tools as you can to assist you in changing your behavior, so make it imperative that you use this time so that you can worry every day. It may sound kind of funny or strange, but this is an effective tool, this has worked for many of those who just need to stress for no reason, it gives them something specific to focus on as well. This should become an important part of your daily life, schedule it the same way that you do your morning stretches, prayer, meditation, and exercise. During this time, you can actually have a list of things to remind yourself to worry about. This will probably turn out to be a really relaxing time for you, especially if you are one of those serious worrywarts. Part of self-awareness is knowing who you are, so if you are the type to worry constantly, use that to your advantage and make it a scheduled part of your day, this way you are accepting who you are while being in control of how you act upon it. Once you get that out of the way, now you can get on with the rest of the day and whatever else that you need to do. You will not waste quality time sitting around worried about something that you probably have no immediate control over anyway, so now you can focus on your life and

start living a more productive and effective lifestyle. It has never made any sense to me when people worry constantly, but as you go through life, you learn that there are certain people who actually feel the need to worry about something. If this is your personality, then you should be able to find something to worry about during your scheduled time, because most of the time you are already doing it anyway, you will create something to worry about if you do not see anything at the time. Now that you are going to schedule a time for it daily, this can be done without judgment or interruption, and you can literally sit and do nothing but worry about all those things in your mind or on your list. Trust me, those who are closest to you will appreciate this more than you do, it will give them a break from constantly having to listen to you going round and round about mostly, nothing at all.

Music

When we listen to music, the part of our brain that controls actions, movement, and creativity is activated, which can make you feel really good as well as motivate you to finish what you may be working on. Dancing is a great way to relieve stress; you can also manage to sneak in a quick workout while you forget about the madness of your day for those few moments. Sometimes you might have to do something that makes you feel uneasy, nervous, and less than confident, and listening to an inspirational song makes you feel so good and so much more courageous. It will also lift up your mood and change your energy as those times when you feel down or you are not feeling inspired or motivated to do anything. Music has been known to assist people in getting through a task at work, during exercise or while working, turning on that music can shift the energy in the room and change the way that you are feeling.

chedule Silly Time

When you are engaged in doing something that you love to do, you really enjoy doing it, and you can have fun as well, you are going to be more creative and more productive as a result of those facts. Try to act as silly as you can, think of the times in college or high school, even as far back as your childhood. Take a moment to tap into that innocence and immaturity and allow yourself to reside there for a while. Play your favorite board games, be spontaneous, do the things that you really love and enjoy, this will enable you to have a consistent smile on the inside and out. Laughing out loud, having true genuine fun, being extremely silly, all while exploring and learning new things, this is good for the soul and keeps you young as well. When you decide to have a great time whenever you get the chance, plan much laughter, and it will greatly enhance your life, especially if you are sharing this time with somebody that you really love, like your closest friends and family.

Have Fun & Laugh Out Loud

We all love to have a good laugh because it usually makes us all feel so good, and for that moment, nothing can take away that feeling overwhelming joy that you feel. Whoever that person is that you can get together and laugh uncontrollably with, spend as much time with them as you can, every week if possible. Not only is laughter therapeutic, being around those you love, but trust can also help to lift up your spirit, when you are laughing so hard that you feel like you may actually lose a gut or urinate on yourself, this is great to get rid of stress.

Time Management

Working to achieve better time management is a good thing to do, because when you make it a habit to be mindful of how you are using your time, the more you will accomplish, which will probably result in you producing a higher quality of work. Knowing what is important, and having your values in

place and living your life in direct harmony with the goals that you are trying to achieve, will increase positive outcomes. Making sure to use your time wisely is essential to living an effective lifestyle as well as ensuring that you live in a more peaceful manner, due to less stress. Behaving as if your time is extremely valuable and important, will actually increase the level of importance and value that you feel about yourself as well. This will also improve self-esteem and confidence because when you know how your day is going to be spent, and exactly what you are going to do with each minute, you begin to feel very powerful and more in charge of the direction that your life is moving. The bottom line is, you have less stress when your time is managed in a specific manner because you pretty much know where each moment of your day is going to be spent. You have a certain amount of time do get things done, and when things do not fall into place, you are so organized and proactive, that you already have a few back-up plans in place. Many times, others will view you as cocky, because you are always making moves that are certain to play a part in achieving your goals. When you stay focused, organized, and live your life based on what is important, people get intimidated by that, which causes them to perceive you in a negative way.

Our Time

We all need to be aware that we have control over where our time goes and how it is used, we only get fifty-two weeks in one year, so we need to make it a point to make the best use of this time and realize how precious it is. Many of us allow this important time to be taken up by things that are not at all important or have any real meaning to our well-being or our future. We really need to stop, take a moment, and be mindful of how much of our time we are spending on what truly matters to us and what we are doing to complete future goals. Think of the last time you really took the time to pay attention to where your time is being spent, and how much you are wasting, you probably have not done anything like this in a long time, if at all. Now you are going to focus on

the time that you spend caring for yourself, which I am sure that you realized very quickly that you never really do much at all, so it is time to start now. Prioritize what is most important, put yourself at the top of the list and make sure that you remain there, that spot needs to be yours at all times because taking care of you is vital to you being able to help and take care of others. You now have an awareness of your power to change anything, so just make a decision and put your plan into action. Coming to the conclusion that your self-care, your health, your partner, and your family are all more important than anything else that you may have going on, which includes your career. Do not ever make your career or work more important than your family; this is not worth it, if you have been doing this, then you need to change this immediately.

Prioritize

Learn to get your mind together, sit down, relax and focus on what is truly important in your life, now is the time to prioritize the things in your world, and start using the precious time in each day for the things that really matter the most. Come up with a list of things that are of vital importance, while also taking a moment to determine what items and people need to be cut off immediately. If you do this correctly, it should include a few of your bad habits and a few of those no-good friends. You will notice that you do not need them once you reorganize your life and focus only on what is essential to you being able to live an effective life. This will definitely cut down on your stress because you are now only focused on the things that will be in harmony; you're your goals and dreams. Positive thoughts and energy should be the center of your attention, while those negative thoughts are not lasting as long as they used to. Once again, you are now making a commitment to work on your mental well-being, relieving your stress, and only entertaining things that are going to improve your life. You will automatically feel less stress because of the empowerment you feel, which is because you have taken control of your life and now have self-confidence and self-esteem. Feeling sorry for yourself, living in those negative thoughts and

emotions, is no longer an option for you because you are now proactive and optimistic.

Release Shame

In order for shame to manifest, it will need the assistance of secrecy, silence, and judgment, which we all know a little bit about. Most shame takes place because of an action that we have committed or something that we may have said, but you can overcome it if you just learn how to release it. Shame is just like depression, stress, and anger; they will destroy you if you do not get them in check by dealing with what caused you to experience these emotions in the first place. Do not let it reside within your spirit, tell it to those bags and get out of your life, because you are not holding onto any more secrets, so there is nowhere for shame to manifest inside of you anymore. The first thing you need to do is to think of someone that you feel you can trust so that you are able to share your story with them. If you do not have a close friend or family members that you have for support, then you can tell a stranger, it will be ok, the main focus here is for you to release all of that out of your system. This may seem a little strange, but when you are talking to someone that you do not know, you will most likely open up and tell them even more than you would tell someone that you know. You can also write a quick note or a long letter. This is another effective way to get those feelings and thoughts out of your mind, and let go of that stress. If you are not into the whole journal thing, then you can try this each time you are having a difficult time with any emotion, just take a moment to write down everything that you are thinking and feeling. Do not think, try to edit or try to have it make sense; the point is to just get it all out, so it does not weigh you down anymore. In order to survive, the shame needs to keep that power going, so when you finally speak about your truth, whatever that may be, that shame has nowhere to exist and you will get rid of it forever. Just be mindful not to allow it to live comfortably within your spirit, which will happen if you continue to keep secrets, or acting as if you are doing great when you are

actually a total mess. Whatever you are dealing with, you need to find a way to talk about it, in order to be able to truly move on with your life. One of the first ways that you can begin to push yourself into this new behavior is to dig deep inside, find that story that you swore you would never tell to anyone, then go and tell it as if it was a huge accomplishment in your life, trust me you will feel so free. The feeling of freedom, without any weight on your shoulders, is a feeling that you may become addicted to, which will cause you to start letting all of those secrets out!

MOTIVATION

Staying Motivated

In order to ensure that you continue to feel inspired and motivated, you need to have healthy and relevant habits in order to keep the focus on your goals that you plan to accomplish. Find creative ways to remind yourself of the things you need to do, and the steps that you need to take every day in order to get what you want. This can help to make things just a little bit easier on you, as well as keep you motivated to take action the next day. If you are someone who believes that you are confident, but are just sitting around without taking any type of action, this is not really displaying any kind of confidence; it is actually showing the opposite. It does you no good to feel confident if you are not consistently taking step towards achieving your goals, this is where true confidence and self-esteem comes from, working hard and being proud when something is accomplished. Sometimes, it can be pretty difficult to keep yourself motivated if you are going through a rough time in your life, this can cause you to want to take a break or just give up on what you are trying to do. You also have to try to remain disciplined enough to make sure you do what you have to do each and every day, so this can be a challenge, especially those days you feel extremely tired or stressed. Every one of us has taken a fall to the ground. It is all a matter of how you handle getting back up and making plans to move forward with your life. Each time we fall down or face a setback, this is actually a chance to learn a lesson and make sure that we never make that same mistake again. A great way

to keep yourself inspired and motivated is to think back a few years ago to when you were working towards something, most likely. It is something that you have completed or accomplished, so you should congratulate yourself. This can serve as a reminder that you are committed to working hard and dedicated to finishing whatever it is that you start.

Setting Goals

When you set goals for yourself, make sure that they actually motivate and inspire you to want to accomplish and achieve them. You want to make sure that your goals are something that is important to you, something specific and relevant to the future that you have planned for yourself. When your goals are designed to work in harmony with what you are doing currently and your future, then you are more likely to work harder to achieve them. You want to be sure that you are committed as well as viewing your goals as urgent, to ensure greater chances at having success. Give yourself a timeline to complete your goals, so that there is always a specific date to get something achieved; this will keep you on track in terms of moving on to the next goal. I also suggest that you write your goals down, keep track of your progress, and reward yourself when you complete something. This will give you encouragement during those hard times when you feel like giving up, quitting or starting something new without finishing what you are currently working on. When you are writing goals down, be very clear and specific, this way you are not just writing words on paper to fill up the empty space, you are very serious and determined to complete each thing on that sheet. This is another reason you want to make sure that your goals are something that you truly love or desire because you are going to need that love for whatever it is to keep you going during the times when you are not inspired or motivated to keep going. If it is not something that you really love or want to do, then you will be more likely to give up when things are not going the way that you think they should be going. Make sure that it is something that you can actually achieve, do not set a goal that you will have to go to Mars in order

to get done, be certain that you will actually be able to take the necessary steps that you need in order to complete it. Lastly, you want your goals to be directly related to the direction you want your life and career to go, this will make things go just a little smoother for you and you will develop the focus that you need in order to achieve your dreams. The last thing that you want to do is, to waste your precious time on goals that do not mean anything to you or goals that do not matter if they get achieved in the long run. Making sure that your goals are important and relevant will make sure to help keep you motivated to finish what you have started and complete things. Since you are now working on your goals, dreams, and desires, you should be planning and preparing for your future, so the next step is to start making the necessary moves in order to complete and accomplish those things. Keep track, congratulate yourself and give yourself praise for each small step that you take; this will continue to motivate you to keep going and working hard.

Never Give Up/Back-Up Plans

Being consistently resilient will ensure that you do not fall apart when things do not go as you planned for them to go, it will actually cause you to become even more optimistic because you really look forward to having to come up with an alternative. You will never give because you realistically anticipated that things could go wrong, so you already had plans B, C, D, E, and F ready to go. Be consistent with coming up with new plans and ideas, because you will always be prepared and armed with an immediate response to things falling apart or going totally wrong. The key is to be consistent in terms of coming up with alternatives, new ideas, and make sure that you have at least three back up plans to your back up plan. There is always another way to go, even if it means setting aside that idea for a moment so that you can clear your mind for another step you need to take towards your goal. This ensures that you are always making important moves.

Sticky Notes

Place your goals on sticky notes and put where you can remind yourself daily of the things that you need to do. You can place them up on your walls, desk, computer monitor, bathroom mirror, refrigerator, and everywhere else in your house so that you will see them everywhere that you go. When you walk into your room and look at these goals each day, this will also act as a motivator and inspiration for you to keep going.

Talents & Hobbies

You should take the time to focus on the gift that you have, because God gave each of us a unique gift, so you need to work on it or tap into it. Whatever time you have, use it to love yourself and be thankful for the talent and skills that you have, you may have to remind yourself to be thankful and that there are many people who cannot do what you can do. Go to the mirror right now and tell that person to go and practice or get back to doing what they love or desire, it is a blessing to have dreams and goals, so make sure that you take the time to work on those things. This is where having a great support system in your life is a good idea because when you get down or lose interest in your skills and or talents, friends and family can be right there to help to get you back on track.

Your Passion

Now, we are going to touch on the subject of being passionate about something, having a passion for something can be very helpful in terms of building up your self-esteem and your self-confidence. If there is something that you are interested in, waste no more time, you need to start doing whatever it is, immediately! Not tomorrow, or next week, but right now, you can at least make plans to take a step, or even if you just write down the goal, that is

already one step you have made towards beginning to dive into your passion. If you do not have anything that you maybe passionate about it already, then just take some time to become self-aware, because we all have something in our hearts and minds that we really want to do or achieve. You may have to dig deep within yourself, especially if you are not mindful of your true inner self and what you really desire. When you truly begin to reflect, you will really think about what makes you happy, what makes you sad, what makes you bored, as well as your dreams and imaginations. Once you get to know yourself, you will have a better understanding, and you can begin work towards and go after things that are near and dear to your heart.

Purpose

God put all of us here for a reason, and many people live their whole life and never discover what their purpose is. You have to want to find out what yours is. A common wish for many is that their purpose in life will line up or be similar to what their passion may be; this seems to be something that puzzles many people. Just because you love something or you may be extremely passionate about something does not mean that is your purpose on this earth. This can be very tricky and confusing to many because there are so many individuals who believe that these two are the same when they are not. If you are truly blessed, then they may actually be the like one another, this happens often, especially when someone is really spiritual. Many times when someone is working towards a goal, they may find that no matter how hard they work or what they do, it never seems to come together. Often this is because you may not be on the path that God has designed for you, so he will continue to destroy that path or guide you in another direction. Most of the time, we do not know that this is what is happening; we are just so focused on why we cannot do what it is that we want to do. This is a good reason to try and keep a close relationship with the creator because your guardian angels are always there talking to you and trying to keep you on the right path.

Quiet Place

In creating a space to focus on inner peace, you are going to need plenty of room to think, relax, create, breathe, just be free, and imagine yourself floating! You need to be able to come home to a peaceful environment that fits into the new way that you are now living your life. Try to become a master at relaxing and re-energizing yourself at the same time. This is going to be what this special space is all about, focusing on you and your self-worth. As soon as you begin to do this, you are going to feel something different and beautiful in your spirit, and you will develop a yearning for it. This is going to assist you in feeling better physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally, because you have finally found a way to release everything that you have had pinned up inside of you. Now you are focused on your quiet time, some like to meditate during this time and others just like to sit and truly try to clear their mind of everything. Just take a moment and connect deeply with yourself on a spiritual level; this will feel like you are cleansing each time that you do it.

Reframe Your Thinking

We are not able to control which thoughts come into our minds, but we can replace the ones that cause us to have negative reactions to the emotions that are attached to those thoughts. Those are the ones that we can view from a different perspective, reframe the situation, and come to a healthier conclusion. As I stated before, this is a great skill to use. It can actually help you learn to be more mindful of the way that you think, as well as the way that you react to certain situations. Remember to take the time to practice reframing every situation that you are in. This way, you will train your brain to get used to doing this, and it will become natural for you. When you find yourself in a difficult circumstance, take a moment and find something positive about what is going on, this is not easy to do at first, but when you are consistent, it becomes less

difficult.

Be Open To Change

You need to be open to embracing change; this way, you will not immediately reject new thoughts, ideas, or new ways of seeing and doing things. You should be open to the possibilities of finding alternative ways to achieve something because this will open up your mind and spirit for new things to come and reside. When you are set on a certain or routine way of doing things, you will never be encouraged to do things any other way, because you have allowed yourself to become comfortable doing things the same way consistently. A welcome change at all times, as a matter of fact, you should go out and seek it instead of waiting for it, welcome it with open arms when you see it. You should be on a mission to do the total opposite of what you usually do. If you like for things to always be perfect, then you should choose something and make sure that you mess certain parts of it up intentionally! If you always do everything as planned and never go off of schedule, then you should try to have a whole day where nothing is planned. Just wing it, go out of the house and have a great without thinking about it. This will help you to loosen up a bit and notice that life will not end if you do not do everything on schedule all of the time. Remember to be positive, proactive, creative and optimistic when you are talking about your aspirations, goals or your dreams. In addition to walking with your head high, walking and confidence like we talked about you have to remember to speak those positive words into your spirit. You need to change the way you speak about yourself as well as the way you think. We do want to continue with this practice of finding the courage for change in our lives because it is very important in becoming the new you. We want to constantly challenge ourselves to try new things, scary things as well as unfamiliar things. If you have a need for order and predictability, then we are going to challenge that to the fullest. Doing things the same way week in and week out will keep you stuck on one wave and will keep you from being all that you were meant to be. You can

learn quite a bit by choosing activities or hobbies that will give you a chance to learn something that may already exist inside of your spirit.

Being Proactive

This will involve making it a habit to look at where you focus your time and energy, so that you are able to separate the things that have no specific importance, and you're your mind on the work on what needs to be done. If you are wasting precious time doing something that is pretty much useless and doing you no good or not assisting in moving you forward, then let it go immediately. Do not use up important minutes of your day with things that you cannot control or things that are not in direct harmony or connection with the goals that you have set for yourself.

Positive Outlook

Positivity is a great way to make someone forget that they are having a bad day or that they may not be feeling too well, it can be so contagious, just like a smile, and it also can make a huge difference in the way that a person's day is going. It always warms the soul to use positivity to make others feel better and more optimistic. The more positive you are, the more you will make it a point to keep other positive people around you because positivity breeds positivity, which is a constant source of inspiration. It is not difficult to make others feel what you are feeling, by projecting your emotions and what you are feeling at that moment. Make a decision today to be happy, and once you do that, nothing else really matters because you actually already have everything you need from God to survive, so everything else is a bonus. Choose to be happy, which is a state of mind, and many people actually believe that happiness is simply having something to look forward to. We already have what we need to live a happy life so we should stop and. Embrace your flaws, appreciate your shortcomings, laugh at yourself and try to learn from your mishaps and mistakes. Find alternative

ways to find the good in bad situations, this takes work, but just make it a habit, and you will find yourself doing it all of the time. There is always positive or good in a situation; you just have to make it your mission to find it and express it to others. Positive thinking is not about fooling yourself. It is more about changing your outlook to a different perspective because it is good to know how to see things another way, reframing the situation and looking for something positive to focus on.

Expect Success

Why not expect miracles for ourselves, our lives, and our children, when you expect good things, something good is going to happen, this is a choice as well as showing our faith. Do not let your mind tell you that something negative is going to happen in order to stop your progress, or mess up the steps that you are taking towards your dreams. When you wake up, decide what you are going to have a good day, no matter what comes your way, no matter who you encounter, you can decide to have a good day. It is all about changing the way that you think and deciding what your day is going to be like. This is not to say that negative or unexpected things will not occur; this is your way of planning not to let anything or anyone keep you from doing what you have to do. When you start your day with the determination that you will move forward and get things accomplished, you will do just that, no matter what happens during your day. It will be as if your mind already had plans for mishaps or setbacks, so this is why you will not be completely thrown off by something unexpected happening. Often times people will begin their day thinking that they are going to have a dad day, this is just the devil trying to see if you will allow him to claim your day, that is why I say just replace those thoughts with ones of your own. Take this time to say a quick prayer, gather your thoughts, and get your mind back on your goals, dreams, and desires. These are the things that you expect will make your life more meaningful and enhance your happiness, so take the time to spend thinking of more ways to get what you want and what you are

working towards. Those positive thoughts and plans you have, are your seeds, when you plant them, water them, take good care of them and nurture them, they are going to grow into success for you. Be sure to speak about and take actions that will bring you the things you want, and believe that it is going to happen for you.

Peace

We must make sure our inner peace is protected because our spiritual ancestors are constantly at work, putting us in environments and around people that represent who we were meant to be and what our true purpose is. Make sure that you are setting yourself up for success by being one of the positive thinkers on this planet, which will cause you to receive a flow of positive and creative energy. A huge part of having peace in your life is making sure that you do not have toxic people around you and that you do not put yourself in situations where there is trouble or drama.

Courage

Being brave enough to face your fears is a good tool to use in your journey to increase your courage, which is one of the best things that you can do to improve your confidence, is to stand up and look your fears in the face, then laugh real loud. Fear is not always your enemy; it can actually force you to face something that you have been trying to avoid. Even when things seem to be difficult or scary, you still need to stand up and face it, just tap into your courage and be brave. This can only help you get through life. It does not mean that you are not afraid; it just means that you are not a prisoner of that fear. Stress is a part of life that we have to deal with. We just have to learn how to manage it and become experts at distressing ourselves in difficult situations. While displaying the courage for change, be mindful, and reward yourself for the small accomplishments, because you have a lot of hard work to see the changes

manifest in your life.

Trash Bin

I want for you to make yourself what we will call a recycle bin, which will be a place that you will be able to throw the in your life in there when it is time, you can put notes and letters that you have written in order to get things off of your chest. This bin is going to be very important from here on out because this is where you are going to start dumping all of those negative thoughts, and any other thoughts that may be negative. You are going to learn to enjoy doing this exercise. It is another one of those things that you may end up keeping and using forever. It feels so good being able to have a specific place that you can dump all of this negative crap into so that you can just do away with it. You may have written a small note to someone who has hurt you in the past. You can throw it in this bin so that you can get it off of your chest and out of your system. It is going to be there to serve as your emotional release and dumping ground! You may need to use this tactic until you can build up your courage and confidence in order to actually have an important conversation with someone. Write down the things that you plan to say, or what you want to ask them, it can work really well, while helping to build up your confidence

Receive & Give Back

When you catch a cold or virus, you are usually very careful not to give it to someone else, or even worse, if we find out someone has given us cold at work. What I am referring to here is something that you want to catch and give on a consistent basis, which is love and positive vibes at all times. There are so many positive things that we can catch from others like Inspiration, love, courage, motivation, work ethic. These are things that you can catch and then make an effort to pass them onto someone else.

Whatever you have that may be uplifting, positive, loving, motivating, be mindful that you are holding onto something that could change the life of someone, so let it go. Get into the habit of being mindful enough to know when there is something that you may need to catch, as well when you need to and give back to someone else.

Embrace the Mystery

You are not supposed to know everything, or even how to figure out most things, so enjoy the ride and the mystery that life is!! Have a good time while you figure things out and have fun learning new and adventurous things. Educate yourself by reading as many books as you can and welcome as many new facts that your mind can handle. Communicate with as many people as you can, especially with those people have different views and backgrounds than you do, it is always a good idea to try and learn from those who are different from you and who grew up with other values that you and your family. The best thing you can do is just acknowledge and appreciate the depth of life, and how much of a mystery it truly is, this is when you set out to find those answers. Remember to have a good time, be compassionate to others, enjoy life, embrace love and educate yourself while you are going through this exciting journey. Life is never what we expect, so embrace the puzzle and the mystery as you try to figure it all out.

Inner Voice/Guardian Angel

We all have to get in the habit of listening to that beautiful inner voice that speaks to us constantly throughout our lives, it has continued to guide us, warn us, direct us, and telling us which way to go and which way not to go, but we always choose to listen to the voice that speaks the loudest. This loud voice is the one that encourages us to do the things that we should not be doing; it usually screams at us and encourages us to do or say negative or unhealthy

things. Here is a great example: You have been trying to quit smoking and have been doing really well, then you hear that loud voice telling you to go ahead and have a cigarette, and how just having one is ok. IT IS ONLY ONE! THAT WILL NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE, IT IS NOT A BIG DEAL, JUST DO IT!!

This is the type of message that you will always receive from that loud voice. It is only going to tell you to do things that are going to cause you harm, so be aware of this voice, and do not listen to it. When your guardian angel, which is the soft and quiet voice, speaks to you, learn to listen, instead of getting defensive and thinking of everything that the loud negative loud voice has said to you. When you are mindful of the fact that both voices speak to you consistently, especially during decision making, you will be able to make better decisions, simply by being mindful that there are two different voices speaking to us. Make it a habit to call on your guardian angels when you need assistance. They are there to help us anytime we need them and look forward to doing those extra things for us. This is just another power you have that you were probably not aware of, but now you realize what is going on inside of your mind, so take advantage of it and use it. Both of these voices have been with us for our entire lives, and they will be with us until we leave this earth. The softer voice is constantly talking to us, guiding us and directing us with love and care, so we must learn to trust it more, and tune out that loud voice when it starts screaming at us. The more you get used to finding that soft voice, listen to it and trust in it, that voice will eventually get louder and louder, and that loud negative voice will get softer. Choose to become familiar with that quiet inner voice, when you finally understand it, learn how to use and follow it, the outcomes in your life will be more positive.

Get Into the When

When you speak about your plans and goals with direct intention, the outcome will usually reflect that. Get rid of words like IF I or WILL I. Those words should not even be used in your vocabulary when you are discussing your

goals and dreams. The only type of statements that you should be making the need to look similar to these:

***When I accomplish my goals**

***When I spend quality time with my partner**

***When I get my new home**

***When I celebrate the success of my family**

***When I publish my next book**

***When I start my business**

You can use this to turn a possible negative situation into something positive by being proactive and prepared. If you have an appointment at the doctors' office, you already know that you are going to be sitting there for at least three hours waiting to be seen. Since you already know how it is going to go, come prepared for that, take yourself a puzzle book, have some headphones so that you can listen to some relaxing music, the point is not to sit there upset and complaining, just sit, relax and be okay with the wait. There is no need to get annoyed or upset, especially because you knew in advance that the wait is forever, and you would most likely be there for most of the day. This is the reason that you took time off from work, so calm down and chill at the moment. Do not anticipate stress, anger and being annoyed by saying things like: "I am going to be pissed, having to sit there for hours."

What You Should Be Saying Is:

*When I get there I am going to work on some puzzles

*When I get there I am going to eat some snacks,

*When I get there, I am going to listen to relaxing music while I wait

*When they call my number I am going to be ready

When you take the time to re-frame the situation, you will automatically program your mind to prepare for what is going to happen when you get there, which can save you a tremendous amount of energy and just prepare yourself for a long wait. It takes a lot of energy to get upset, annoyed, so you should not waste that energy on something that you cannot do anything about.

System & Process

You should have a great system in place that is designed to ensure that you accomplish all of your goals and fulfill your dreams. Keep your mind on the process of the system that you have in place so that everything will work in harmony together in the end. The outcomes we have in our lives are usually mirrors of the habits we have and how we have lived our lives and conducted ourselves. Many people are great at talking that good talk, but let the time come when it is time to get to work and show some action, those same people go missing. The reality of it is that they do not have the work ethic or the motivation it takes to get the results that they want, but they still believe that they deserve to get what they want and what it is that they are looking for. When someone has a belief that they are overweight, then the focus should be on the way that they are eating, and what causes them to behave this way. Wanting to have a bigger bank account means that you are going to need the discipline that it takes, in order to consistently put money into that account. That account is a mirror reflection of the way that you are into spending your money, you may feel that you have control over your habits, but most of the time, habits are taking

control of you. You need to reflect on your system that is in place, perfect it and allow it to do what you intended for it to do, keep you in check. When it comes to building and starting new habits, you should be clear and truly understand how the process works out, and structure your habits in a way that you control them instead of being a victim of them. When you are serious about accomplishing a goal, it should be much easier to say no to the things that intrude on your life and delay our progress. An athlete who is in training will have to say no to all of his friends that are asking for them to hang out, being focused, determined and disciplined, will make it easier to say no. When you are consistent in making sure that priorities come first in your life, this will ensure success for you and your future.

Winners and losers have the same goals, but there is always something that will be used to distinguish them, this is the type of system and process that they have in place in order to complete the goal.

Example: When someone is living in a nasty house, they may clean it, but this has no real effect, because they probably will never take the time to change the habits that caused their house to become nasty in the first place, so it will always be back in the same condition within a few days. Cleaning the house without addressing the real issue, is not going to solve anything, so this will probably always be a nasty home. Developing and maintaining healthy and clean habits will ensure that your house will never again be nasty. Your identity and character are connected to your habits, so make it a point to ensure that behavior makes a statement for who you truly want to identify as being.

Keep Your Word

I am a true believer that your word is really all that you have, so you need to make sure that you keep your word, honor your commitments, and always be as honest and sincere as you can. When you are the type of individual that is consistent in keeping their promises and doing what they said they would do, this makes others view you as someone that they can count on, when you say you will be there for them. You want to be known as the type of person who is reliable and trustworthy, the one who will always come through if they say that they will. Many times, people will break their word, thinking that it is only something small, but to that other person, it was something that you said you would do, so to them, it is most likely something important. Just be mindful of your time, personal interest and be honest with them; if you do not want to do something, just say no. It makes more sense, to be honest, and tell the person no, than for you lie to them, with no intention of helping them, stringing them along, ditching phone calls and text messages, all when you could have just said no. For some of us, this type of behavior comes naturally, but there are others who actually find it easier to lie, pretend they are going to help, and just go missing on that person. This is not the way to go, first of all, you would not want anyone doing that to you, so just think of it that way. Some people are going to have to work on keeping their word and honoring commitments, which is ok, as long as you are mindful of the fact that you need to make a change and get better with doing so. A major key is not to make promises or commit yourself to something or someone that you know you will not be able to honor. Be honest with yourself and others when making plans. Honesty always works the best, if you are not able to do something, then make sure that you communicate that with the person who is requesting it, do not say yes when you know you are never going to come through. If you are not a dishonest person, this is the type of behavior that makes you look exactly like that, so just be mindful of the things that you say that you will do for someone, and make sure that you actually intend to follow through. You will enjoy many more great nights of sleep when you conduct your life in a

manner where you show personal integrity, are not dishonest, and keep your word. This will limit the amount of stress in your life. You will not be living your life constantly trying to figure out who you lied to that week, where you are supposed to be, how you can hide from this person or how you can add to the lie you told last week to keep your cover. If you just operate with honesty and integrity, you will never have these type of questions annoying your spirit twenty-four hours a day, face it, when you run around lying constantly, you end up burning yourself out eventually.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for making it through to the end of Emotional Intelligence 2.0, I hope that you were able to find some information that will assist you going forward in your personal as well as your professional life. My goal was to make sure the book was simple, yet informative, and full of the tools you need to become emotionally intelligent. If you found this book useful in any way, I would really appreciate a review on Amazon; this is really helpful. We have four basic emotions which are: Happiness, Sadness, Fear and Anger. The bottom line is, you need to be able to identify, and be mindful of each of these emotions, as well as the way that you respond to having these emotions. If you have the ability to relate to other individuals, while knowing how to connect with your own emotions and remain calm, then you are emotionally intelligent. Research has shown that individuals who have emotional intelligence, are usually in a better mental health state, their job performance is always at a higher level and they are known to be great at leading and inspiring other people. Taking the time to improve your emotional intelligence will not only enhance your social and communication skills, but it will also improve the way that you interact with other team members in the workplace. When it comes to being a leader, having the ability and personality which makes it natural to take control of a situation and change it for the better, motivates and inspires others to want to follow you. The bottom line is that when you are able to manage your emotions, this assists you in becoming much stronger when it comes to having to stay calm in difficult situations or hostile environments. Just as emotional intelligence can have an

effect on the lives of adults, it can also have effects on the characters and the lives of children as well. When children are exposed and taught to be aware of situations and people socially and emotionally, they grow into adults who are better able to cope with difficult emotions and are usually better at resolving conflicts. Their listening and communication skills are very effective, and they are very good at solving their own problems, as well as helping others with theirs. Others need to develop emotional maturity in order to understand, empathize and work with other people if we do not, long-term success, true happiness, and healthy relations will not be a reality.

THE EMPATH EXPERIENCE

Empath a Complete Guide

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INTRODUCTION

Being empathetic means having the ability to have genuine understanding and compassion for other people, which happens because they can see themselves in the shoes of someone else. These individuals can understand, feel, and experience the emotions of someone else without being consumed and taken over by them, which gives them the ability to remain calm and in control. Even though they are not allowing the emotions to take over them, they are truly feeling those emotions, so this allows them to truly understand how that person is feeling and what they may be going through. Many of these people are very skilled when it comes to perceiving what may be going on with someone else, even with animals and plants. They are known to be highly sensitive and always very aware of everything in their surroundings. They do not mind being by themselves; they need alone time to keep their minds refreshed. Most of the time, they are not interested in large crowds or places that are extremely loud; they are not into places, people, or things that can cause obvious distractions for them. When it comes to children and animals, they are drawn the energy of these types of personalities. When it comes to listening to others, this is not something that they have to force themselves to do, they love and enjoy being there for people, and they do not mind being asked for advice and guidance. Do not be fooled; these individuals are very emotional; they have been known to experience ten emotions all within an hour, so be careful and watch yourself if you offend one of them. Many times, they have not become the masters of their emotions, so they will be all over the place emotionally, taking on the feelings of

others without being able to balance it all, this is very overwhelming.

ARE YOU AN EMPATH?

NOW THAT THIS has become a popular topic, many people are wondering if they are empathetic and want to know how they can become this way if they are not. When you are the type of person that always absorbs the emotions of other people and continue to feel it even when you are not with them anymore. Many times you will carry these emotions with you after they have gotten past their situation. You will be overwhelmed with someone's problem, even when that person did not bring their issue to you. Being able to feel the physical pain that someone is feeling as well as how their mental state may be at the time. There are many times that you have drained your energy, because of taking on so much of the emotions of another person, this can cause you to have to find some alone time to recharge and refresh. If you are considered a good listener by most of the people that you know, and they always come to you for advice, there is a good chance that you are filled with empathy. One of the things that you do not like to be around or witness is any type of violence or people being cruel to someone else. This is not something that your spirit can handle. If animals and children are naturally drawn to you, this is a good sign that you are a true empathy, because animals and children can see good or bad in people. It always comes naturally for you to be caring, understanding, and compassionate to others, many people have to work at these traits, but to you, they are built into your system. And finally, you are over sensitive, according to most people who know you, you are the type of person who will experience all kinds of emotions at once, which others do not understand.

Definition of a True Empath

Empathy is used in a wide range of situations we are involved in and experiences that we have in our lives, which allows us to recognize the emotions and feelings of other people, as well as what they may be thinking at that time. These individuals are so spiritually connected with the moods of other people, both good and bad, that they can drain their energy taking on those negative feelings. Whenever they are around positive feelings, love, and peace, their body feeds on this like nutrients and begins to heal and grow internally. Most of them are exceptional listeners with the ability to solve almost any problem or issue for others who may be having a hard time figuring things out. They always have people turning to them for advice, comfort, love, understanding, and most of all, answers. They have a spiritual gift that involves being experts in human psychology, behaviors, and personalities; they are very good a reading people. As a result, it is very hard to lie to these individuals because most of them will be able to see right through you. These individuals get visions and messages; they have healing abilities, psychic tendencies, as well as extremely strong and deep gut feelings, more powerful than the ones normal people experience. Many times they do not have to be around you or even have talked to you recently to know that something is going on with you. They will get feelings, messages, visions, or dreams about you, which will come out of nowhere. All empathetic people are extremely creative and always use their abilities to turn their dreams and ideas into realities that thrive, and most of them are into helping and serving people in some way.

Your Energy

Many times, you will find that random people are easily drawn to you, which is very common for these people because they are blessed with a beautifully open spirit, which consistently welcomes the energy of other people. All human beings can detect that openness within the individual. Even if they are not

empathetic themselves, their spirit is naturally attracted to their healing in that person. There are going to be many occasions where you will find people being drawn to you in so many different ways. They may just want to hang out with you for coffee or a general conversation just so that they can be with you for a moment. Then there will be other times when strangers will randomly seek you out for advice, you probably already have many family members, your friends and co-workers come to you for advice, this is most likely because they feel that you are safe. That openness can be detected by anyone around you, and they can feel in your energy system, that you are there to help them, so they will find a way to get close to you.

Special Gift

Thankfully, being truly empathetic can be pretty cool, especially once you learn that is what you are, figure out how to manage it, which involves keeping control of the reactions to your emotions. It can work for your benefit, as opposed to working against you, as soon as you begin to truly embrace your power, those empathic abilities can provide multiple benefits within your life. It is a very special blessing because you can connect on a spiritual level with any person on this earth, while also being able to read others. You are also able to change the energy of an environment or situation; if that is what your spirit calls for you to do, it will be very natural for you. These abilities can be developed and matured during natural interactions with people during your lifetime. This will ensure positive outcomes in your life, healthier relationships while showing an extremely high level of confidence. Empathic people are very skilled when it comes to being great storytellers, their imaginations go very deep, and knowledge that they possess is limitless. They love the act of romance, they are very gentle and caring and they are usually the one in their family that works on the family tree and makes sure to share those family stories. They have a deeper connection to music than everyone else, so they have to stay away from lyrics or stories that will trigger negative emotions.

Cluster of Abilities

These special beings usually have psychic abilities that often come in groups, especially as the person becomes more aware of their abilities, they will most likely be able to tap into any energy that they choose to. If you come up against someone who can read your thoughts, feel your pains, tap into your emotions as well as read your body language, there is no chance you will be able to deceive them. They will be able to smell you twenty miles away, their spirit will alert them that you are on the way, they will be expecting whatever you think that you have for them, and they will stop you in your tracks. This can be very chilling, having someone tell you not to do or say something that you were getting ready to say to them. Your mind will be blown; because you are going to wonder how they knew exactly what you were planning to say or do, this is an example of an empathic person at their highest level. They are very good at reading subliminal messages, and they can determine who said what, exactly where the message was intended to go, and who can be trusted in that situation. This is why they make great business partners because they can sense when a good deal is on the table, or if they are being presented with a bunch of bull crap. On many occasions, others will notice their skills and talents before they do, and being sensitive, is an asset once it is managed by the empathetic person.

Being Closed Off

When these individuals become closed off or aloof, it can seem very contradicting, because their gifts, abilities, and powers are used to read and feel other people, so spending a lot of time alone seems to make no sense for them. If you were a victim of any type of childhood trauma, you begin to try to shut down your system as much as possible, because it makes you feel safe. This happens frequently, especially before they are aware of how to work with their abilities, so they end up closing down their heart, shutting off emotions, in an attempt to prevent all of these energies from showing up and affecting them. They believe that keeping painful energies from reaching them will protect them

because they are still wounded, and they do not have any idea as to how they go about training. This characteristic of being closed off or aloof can cause others to look at you as if you are cold or heartless, because of the way that you disconnect with people during their times of trauma. The fact is that you are not yet able to deal with seeing someone cry or get hurt in any way; you will always take off and run as if you are running from the police. This is because you feel completely awkward when it comes to trying to handle the pain or suffering of another person, so you are not able to handle it, which causes you to shut down and run away. It is not that you are a horrible person; you are only doing what you know, which is closing yourself off and being aloof. When an untrained person is forced to witness someone going through a painful situation, this will be extremely painful for them as well as hard to handle. When the shut-down process begins, this is when other people begin to look at this person like they are cold and have no compassion for others, which is completely false. They are the opposite, but until they gain the knowledge of who they are, the shutting down and running will continue. When they come into their full power, they will never shut down again, because they now realize the purpose of them being so extremely and beautifully open, which is to help heal others. When surrounded by the right people, and connected in the right places, with the correct type of energy, this special person can be just as open as anyone else. Many times, these personalities are so comfortable with the idea of spending time alone, this can damage your spirit; you need to engage other people to form healthy relationships. These types can be very generous with their compassion and assistance for those who may be in need, but they are not very good at looking out for their own needs. You need to be able to balance between quiet time to recharge and isolating yourself from others altogether.

Living With the Emotions of Others

When you are still feeling the effects emotionally, days later, while that person has moved on and is no longer wasting their energy on whatever it was,

this can take a toll on your mind as well as your spirit. As soon as they let all of those negative emotions out onto your plate, you ate the full meal, dessert, and the leftovers that were supposed to be for the next day. If you are not mature enough in your empathetic walk, it may take you a while to get used to letting go of the emotions of other people, and many times, you will still feel those feelings when you are away from them. It will take a while to learn that you cannot carry all of that weight on your shoulders, especially when it belongs to someone else; they should be carrying their burden. You are only supposed to be there to show support, love, understanding, and care, not to get yourself consumed with the situation, that you are feeling emotionally drained.

Sensitive to Suffering and Pain

Mostly all of these individuals are very sensitive when it comes to suffering or pain of any kind. They cannot stand to see or hear anyone being hurt at all. This is just not something that they can spiritually handle without being extremely affected emotionally, they are too sensitive, and the emotions of what they see will stay with them for a long time. Being sensitive to suffering involves other people as well as animals; this is something that will cause extreme pain and discomfort in their spirit. When they come across someone who has been hurt, they do not just feel sorry for that person, it will go much deeper than that, they will take on some of that pain, and they may even begin to feel discomfort in their own body. They are not even able to watch horror movies, extreme violence on TV, or anything else along those lines. They are just not able to process it without having a strong emotional reaction, which will drain them. The suffering of others, really causes a deep impact on their spirit, even when it is not real, like a TV show or a movie, they still cannot handle it. This is also something that can be worked through during the training stage.

S Detection

You already know they can read people, which can be very beneficial in your life journey when you can see right through the crap that someone is feeding you, there is nothing better. There are some bold people in this world, and most of them have no problem standing right in front of your face, with the intent to deceive you. Even when someone is talking to you with a smile, you will be able to see right past that smile and know if it is genuine or not, this is a true blessing to have this ability. We all remember those times when your mom knew when you were not telling the complete truth. You always wondered how she knew, imagine having that same power with everyone that you come into contact with. It is almost impossible to trick one of them, as they are so good at detecting energy, it does not matter what the person is saying from their mouth, because they can detect the energy, which will let them know right away if that person is telling the truth or not. Being able to read people can sometimes be a problem socially, because you may just want to enjoy a nice conversation with someone, not even thinking about reading them, and all of a sudden, you get a sign. It can be very frustrating because now you have to pay attention, it seems they are lying about something, trying to pretend or misrepresent themselves, and you can see right through it. This causes you to become uncomfortable because now you realize that this person is insulting your intelligence, they have no idea that your spirit is communicating with you and sending you all kinds of negative signals about this person. Many times, your mind may be somewhere else, and your spirit will all of a sudden tell you to pay attention to something or someone. Liars will always feel uncomfortable around you, precisely because you are way too good at reading people, so people are transparent to you. A negative personality will always realize this about you, even if they are not spiritual, they will be able to tell that you can see through them. If they are used to being fully clothed, which means having the ability to fool most people, then you will make the feel naked, and they cannot have that.

o Not Like Conflict

These types of individuals hate conflict because they are super sensitive to the energy around them, that if there is any type of chaos or violent type of energy, it will be extremely painful to them, so they avoid it as much as possible. There are many instances where they avoided conflict when they actually should have taken a stand and stood up for themselves. It can be very difficult for some of them to be able to find that balance between defending yourself and making a point to avoid unnecessary conflict and drama. Many times, they will just walk away, which is the way they always feel is the best way to avoid any kind of conflict, but as I stated earlier, you need to come you're your power, so that you will know when it is time for action. All conflicts do not have to be negative or turn into a fight; sometimes, there can be constructive conflict, which will force you to communicate in an alternative way. It may assist you in coming up with a solution; being mindful of this will all come when you get stronger in your power and abilities.

Crowds and Loud Noises

The empathetic individual is usually uncomfortable in large crowds, negative energy, or places where it is extremely loud, this is super common among them, which is one of the reasons why they will frequently run away from or avoid social situations. They do not care too much for social situations as I stated earlier, it is because they can feel and become assaulted by the energy of others. If they find themselves in an environment where the energy is really heavy, they will jet out of there so fast; it will make your head spin, they are very protective of their energy and spirit, even when they do not realize it. If you happen to be with them when they say they are leaving, I suggest you get ready as well, because they are not going to wait, they will just leave. Usually, these are the ones who have not come into their power yet, so they are not mindful of the fact that they can block those negative energies. They have to realize that they do not have to take on those energies and can block them. This is something that can be learned and mastered over some time while you are working on

strengthening your abilities.

Alone Time

Most of them require a lot of alone time, in the beginning, during the confusion, before they realize who and what they are. Once they come into their power, they realize that they must interact with others, they will still need their alone time but will notice that they do not need as much as they used to. It will take practice and time to get out of the habit of running away from everything and everyone. This is because we have not taken the time to properly heal from the trauma suffered as a child. They have a difficult time dealing with the energies, so until they come into their power and heal, they will continue to run from certain people and situations. When they realize their power and how to master all of their gifts, abilities as well as their emotions, this is when they will stop running and hiding from everyone. The sad reality is, that many of them have lived like hermits for years, not knowing why they do the things they do, and what all of those dreams and visions mean to them. Most of the time, when they learn of who they are, what their power is, and how to navigate their way through this thing, they will begin to love spending time with other people and start looking forward to it. What happens, is they are not longing for all of that alone time anymore, they are making plans and scheduling time with people, to increase their contact with others. They do not like spending that much time alone anymore, thanks to being mindful and well aware of their power and the fact that they can control what energy enters into their spirit.

Different Types of Empathetic Individuals

uper Sensitive

Many times they will almost over-react to something that someone does or says, because they are hurt so easily, due to being able to deeply feel everything, they are very sensitive. This is something that has to be worked on; once it is realized, it takes a while, and it not easy to do because they feel hurt and pain on a much deeper level. Many times, they overdramatize the situations that go on in their lives, when it is not even that serious, this happens as a result of them feeling the things of the world so much more intensely than other people. When someone says something to them, they may take it to the highest extreme in their minds, when it may be the size of a rice grain, but they are just that sensitive. If someone criticizes them, they are immediately feeling that negative sensation inside of them. They are not able to handle it, at least until they become stronger in their abilities. As their skills are improved and enhanced, the sensitivity level will go down somewhat, it will not go away, they will always be sensitive, but they will be able to manage their emotions situation by situation. It takes work, but it can be done, this is one of the blessings of being empathetic, you are well aware of the things that you need to work on, and you will always be guided to where you should be, to get the information that you need. You will get to a point where you will be able to discern whether or not you are acting out of control and if the situation is worth all of the energy that you are giving it. Most of the time you will find that you were exaggerating a just little bit, so you will be mindful enough to bring yourself back down into a state of calm. This is when you are emotionally mature and able to discern these things better.

Anticipatory

A good example of this would be when an individual has negative or uneasy sensations all over their body. This is always a sign to them that something not so positive is going to happen. Many people like to believe that this makes a person psychic, but I am not a fan of that term, some people like to call them prophets, while others refer to it as having visions. However one

chooses to look at it, the fact of the matter is that it is very real, and should not be taken lightly, because the day is coming where these are the individuals that we will follow. I know someone who kept getting bad feelings in her gut the whole night before the attack on the twin towers in New York and the Pentagon, she just thought that they were signs about her family. She had a sister and a niece who had a habit of hanging out on the streets until three or four in the morning, and she believed that her gut kept turning because they may be in some kind of harm. She called her niece a few times throughout the night, pretty much begging her to get off of the streets and go into the house because she had a bad feeling. Well, the next morning, she woke up, like the rest of us, to find out about the horrible incident that had happened, the first thing that she could think of, was the way that she kept getting those uneasy feelings in her gut all night, and it gave her chills. She told her niece that she knew something was wrong but just did not know what it was, but she knew that there was a real reason for why she was feeling that way. The day is going to come when God allows these earth angels to prevent tragic events, as well as stop abusers and criminals in their tracks and bring them to immediate justice; this is a fantasy of mine. In the meantime, as we wait for those times, we should continue to focus our gifts on healing those who have been affected by pains, losses, abuse, and other tragedies.

*P*hysical

These individuals can feel the aches, pains, and illnesses of other people, as long as they are in their presence, for example, they may feel a slight pain in their head if they are in the company of someone with a headache. If they are in the presence of someone who has negative energy, they will feel that, which will automatically activate the need to assist the person in terms of healing. It is usually not possible to lie to them, because if they can sense and feel things, so if you say that you are fine, but actually in pain, they will most likely feel whatever pain or symptoms that you are having, within their own

body. There is a woman who was having horrible pain in her knee; she could not figure out what was going on, she wondered if she bent it while walking, or if she made an awkward turn or something. This was very puzzling to her; she kept feeling this pain for a few days, which was now taking her into a state of panic, so she finally made an appointment to go and see a doctor figure out what was wrong with her knee. Two days later, her sister came back from an out of town trip that she had taken, as soon as she came in the door, her sister noticed that she was limping. Before she could ask what happened, her sister began to tell her how she tripped and fell during her trip, which resulted in her spraining her knee; she was so upset. Immediately, the pain that she had been feeling in her knee, had d gone away, and she no longer felt any type of pain or trauma anywhere in that area. As soon as she got the answer to why she felt that pain, the energy was cleared, and it went away just that quickly. That is the moment when she began to realize that she was onto something special, and began her research on being empathetic.

This is also something that you need to train yourself to be able to handle properly. It is not an easy trait to have, especially when you have not yet learned how to navigate through this world. This can be very difficult to get used to, and it has been known to traumatize those who were early in their gift or those who had no idea of what they were considered to be. It can be very hard to understand that you are taking on the pain and trauma of someone else, especially when you did not intend to, this is part of the gift, these things just come naturally. There are stories that I have heard, where someone was feeling pains in their body but had no idea why, or that they were experiencing the sensations of someone else. At a later time, they would find out that someone close to them was having the same pain, which was in that exact place on their body. Depending on how mindful they are of their abilities, this may be the moment when they realize why they had that strange pain that just came out of nowhere. If they are not aware that they have special abilities, or if they still training themselves to enhance their skills, they will feel something in

their spirit.

Intuitive

These are the ones who have a strong sense of knowing what is happening, what is going to happen, and what has happened. Many times, they can feel when something is about to happen, so they will get up and leave immediately, with no hesitation. They sometimes get messages or clues in their dreams, which end up becoming a reality, and they always seem to know when something serious is going on with someone that they are close to. They are very good at being able to tell when someone is lying to them and when someone is not being genuine about what their intentions may be.

Animal Lovers

These are those special individuals who many people refer to as horse or dog whisperers, which is because they have a good sense of how animals are feeling and what they need at that time. The love they have for animals is at a higher level than most of us, they can connect with the animals, and most of them prefer to be in the company of animals rather than other people! The animals that come into contact with them will always feel their energy and usually pull towards them to form a connection with them.

Green Thumbs

These individuals are said to be the biggest lovers of nature, the planet, and all of the trees on this earth, and they love to live their lives taking advantage of what nature has to offer to all of us. Most of them have what is known as the green thumb; they love gardening, growing fruits, and vegetables, which results in plants thriving in their presence. They are going to have the

natural intuition, which tells them exactly how to care for and tend to any type of plant. They are also very mindful of types of plants, what they are used for, and how they can benefit us. They also have plenty of knowledge of which plants are edible as well as which ones can be used for medicine.

Inquisitive

This is the person that will continue to ask the same question a thousand times. They will do this until they make sure that they are digging as deep as they can go. Each time they try to get answers, they will go deeper each time, because they are going to look beyond the surface. They are always aware of a deeper truth, so they will usually not be interested in participating in the small talk; they are into serious conversations about real issues. They have the type of personalities that are going to want to know why, when, where, and what, this is the way that their brain is wired, they are very inquisitive. There never seems to be an end to the questions that they have, because in their effort to gain knowledge of what is going on, so they will not rest until they get to the bottom of whatever it is they are investigating. Even if it is a simple conversation, they are going to want to know every detail about the situation. They need to have all of the information concerning everything and everyone that they come across. One of the things about them is that they do not like to feel as if they do not have information or answers, so they will keep researching and asking questions until they figure out what it is they need to know.

Dreams

Your dreams will become very intense or strange; you will begin to receive messages and clues as to what is going on in your path. You may see something in your dreams, and find out a week later that same event took place. It will be a life mission to search until you find the answers that you feel are necessary for your peace of mind. This trait will also prove to be beneficial in

your relationships in the workplace or at home. It can be frustrating for you when you cannot find an explanation about something that needs confirmation, and you truly believe that there is always a way to work things out and will find the way. They can access certain knowledge from the universe and get any information that they need because they are free spirits. They cannot stand to be around any kind of clutter; this will block the flow of their energy and their creativity. Their dreams are usually very detailed and they are consistent in trying to find out what their dreams mean because they are very inquisitive. Many of them write their dreams down to keep track of them because they are aware of the importance of the messages and clues they receive while dreaming. They know that those dreams are focused around their own life and they are trying to figure out what to do with the information they receive. These individuals are very mindful of the fact that those are not just random thoughts running around in their minds; they know that the facts are usually linked to their dreams in some way. Then they begin a mission to try and understand the meaning and try to use it to unravel what is going on. Once they are fully into their power, they can put things together by connecting facts from childhood up until the present time. These people are really into daydreaming; they have been doing this since they were young children and will just sit and think for hours. This is something that makes them happy and brings them internal satisfaction. They are extremely uncomfortable with unresolved problems, so their mind keeps thinking while they sleep; this is probably why they get so many messages and clear images in their dreams.

Spirit Lifter

When you are in a spiritually happy place, then you will naturally want everyone else to feel happiness as well. Your instincts are going to be to help every time you carry around a gift of love within your spirit, and you cannot stop yourself from wanting to help. Spirituality is the gift of love. Service to others is the discipline of love. Most of the time, your heart will have you helping

someone without you even being aware of it; afterward, you may realize what you have done for them. You do not stop and think about what you are going to do or how you can help; your heart has already taken action before your mind had a chance to interfere.

Empathetic Children

When children are born empathetic, they will always have that feeling that they are different but will not have a clue as to why they feel that way. Many of these children were raised by parents who showed hatred and resentment toward them. These children are usually bullied, abused, and put down by almost everyone that they come into contact with. They are not in the habit of standing up for themselves, which means that the child will be very defensive and possibly controlling as an adult. By the time they are grown up, they have lived through many horrible events, so a few of them are already masters of their emotions. When they come to the end of their early childhood days, they sometimes begin to realize that some of those emotions they are feeling are not always their own. There have been cases where the parents were also blessed with empathetic abilities, so they were able to use their intuition to see that those qualities in their child.

Mean Adults

Many of them grow up to be extremely controlling, displaying a huge ego, which are both examples of a defense mechanism that was formed in childhood designed to protect them from harm. Instead of protecting themselves, they have turned into this horrible person who has a habit of disrespecting, using, neglecting and putting others down. After surviving a traumatizing experience as a child, they will usually grow up to be a controlling maniac, if they do not check themselves. If you find that you have any type of control issues, this may be a sign that you are still struggling with protection issues. If

you need to have things to be in an exact way, for you to be comfortable or happy, there is a problem there.

Plant The Seed

Empathy will grow just like a beautiful plant when you plant the seed into your children, which will result in a compassionate, caring human being. Try to focus on raising them with love, compassion, and understanding, so that they will turn out the same way.

THE PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND EMPATHS

Cognitive Empathy

This type of empathy is widely viewed as our conscious drive to accurately perceive the emotional state of someone else. If someone is feeling extremely sad, you will automatically pick up on that emotion and try to comfort them; you are just trying to mirror their emotion. Similarly, when a doctor examines a sick patient, he is attempting to comprehend the components of the illness, he is not looking for a reaction from the patient. Cognitive empathy responds to a problem in a cerebral manner, to understand emotions and the way that they work on a mental level.

Emotional Empathy

This lets us know when we physically connect with someone else like they passed their emotions to you as a basketball on the court; this is how it works. You can feel or the way that an individual is experiencing.

Compassionate Empathy

When you enter into an environment where there are other people, the first thing that happens is that you begin to form impressions, evaluate everyone,

and you will connect with the emotions that each person is feeling. You are not able to escape this phenomenon; we are built to have interaction with each other as human beings. When you are in the room with only one other person, you will quickly pick up on their behaviors, body language, and what they are feeling. This takes place without you even trying. Now that this has taken place, your own emotions will be triggered and will manifest into what we know to be as compassionate empathy; you will feel the need to help them discover why they are feeling what they are feeling. The fact that you can take on those feelings of other people can make you feel emotionally drained which will usually annoy or upset the person. It can be difficult to deal with when you are processing the negative emotions of other individuals because you are having all of these feelings that do not even belong to you. Without a sufficient amount of empathy, our relationships cannot reach the level that they should and we may subsequently remain emotionally hollow. Without empathy, the interaction that we have with our families and friends would be very cold with absolutely no feelings or compassion involved at all. There would never be any meaningful relationships and this would be a sad condition for the human race to find ourselves living in. We can use empathy as a deterrent for our bad behavior and it can enhance our perception of causing pain or discomfort to other individuals. When you see someone who needs assistance, you should have no problem being the one who moves quickly to offer that person help.

Emotional Immaturity

Many bonding wounds, end up becoming codependent, fearful of a partner leaving, not knowing how to respond, making a big deal out of small things, self-evaluate, and work on yourself and grow up. Realizing that you're immature in life, will help you as soon as you figure that out, you will immediately begin the maturation process.

Huge Imagination

Consistent fantasies about unlimited abilities, most of the time, these images seem so real to them; they may actually believe they have magical powers. They really believe that they are special and can make important changes in the world and save people the way no one else is able to. This is why so many corporations are so successful because of individuals like this. They can take their minds to places that most people are not able to access. This is mainly because they will stop themselves from imagining certain things. Their brain will tell them that certain things are just not possible, so they will never revisit those thoughts. An empathetic individual will consistently allow their minds to travel all over the place and they will find understanding and comfort in those places as well.

Their Own Way

They are not followers; they are leaders who will always go in the opposite direction than everyone else. They are very mindful of their decision to behave this way; it is part of their self-confidence, knowing how to survive. Sometimes they can come off a little harsh during conversations because they are short and dismissive without trying to be. They do not mean to be rude or mean, but they are just wired differently, and the way they are is just so much different than most people. This is a huge reason that they are so inspirational to others. It is very obvious that they have their own original ideas and they always dance to the beat of their own drum.

Broken Spirits

Thanks to the fact that they grew up in an unsafe, toxic, or abusive childhood, they are usually emotionally wrecked and some of the moodiest

people on the planet. They are exposed to so many emotions at once. They can have ten different moods within an hour, which causes them to be very explosive at times until they learn to tap into that inner calm. Many of them are very good people, but the trauma they suffered has managed to bury the true personality under all of that darkness.

THE SPIRITUAL PURPOSE OF EMPATHS

WE ALL HAVE a purpose in life; if you do not know what yours is, then you should take time to self-evaluate, listen to your heart, follow your gut instincts and begin to make moves. You need that self-awareness so that you can handle all of the emotions that are going to come with interacting with different people, if you are not mindful of how your emotions affect you, you will stay confused.

The Purpose of Empathy

When you look at empathy as a spiritual gift, then you will realize that it is meant to be used as a source of healing for those who need it, which will come naturally to them without having to think about it. Many times, they will already know how to handle the situation, whether it is by praying, getting everyone calmed down, or just making sure that things are going the way that they are supposed to go.

Life of the Empath

Unlike us, these individuals have a critical need for validation to feel that they are successful; it is like the food that humans need to live; they need to be validated and loved. That is where they get their strength from, feeling that they are loved and accepted by others, so when they do not eat, they are not in a

healthy state of mind. So you can imagine how much chaos they have to live with, the emotional rollercoaster that they stay on, and the way that their lives are emotionally unstable. They have a really difficult time dealing with the reality that someone that they care about has lied to them or deceived them in some way. They will get lost emotionally and many times they will blame themselves for what someone else has done to hurt them. They always have to have the things that they need or they will lose their minds very quickly because they cannot handle any type of emotional confusion. The life of this type of person can be very challenging and exciting from the teenage years up until mature adulthood. It is a very beautiful and fulfilling skill to have, especially when you learn to manage it. They are very much into controlling their environments and changing the energy of the room so that they can feel stable. They usually have many talents and skills which enables them to be successful in multiple ways. They will always manage to contribute to society in very important ways and they consistently do very well in the scientific world and when dealing with the spiritual realm. When they have their energy in the correct space, they will always want to bring others into that same space so their energy is good as well. When an empathetic person connects with what they truly need, this is when they truly realize that they are in contact with their healing power and they get energized and their light begins to shine like I was meant to do.

Strong Senses

When you walk into a room, you can sense when something is off, is something is about to happen, or if something has already happened. You are also able to sense when someone has been feeling sad or depressed, and you will probably know why before they get a chance to share it with you. Many times, if you are in a space where someone has passed away, you will be able to sense their spirit immediately, this is a very special gift to have, especially when you learn how to master it. These are all signs you can sense the energy, emotions, and thoughts of those around you because you are very sensitive to the energy of

others. This is why you are not comfortable in negative environments, situations, or being around negative people, your senses are extremely strong, and you can feel all types of energy around you.

Take Care of You

While you are out in the world doing all of this good, helping others, showing love and compassion, do not forget to take care of the person in the mirror, they need your love and comfort more than anyone else. You need to take the time to make sure that your mental, spiritual, and physical health are all in order, you will not be able to effectively make an impact on the lives of others if you are not in the correct state of mind. There are going to be many times where you will begin to feel your energy level go down when there are so many other energies around like worry and fear, but you just need to learn to focus and block that negative energy. This way, you will be able to quickly reconnect with your spirit and go back to having a good time. The faster you jump back to joy, the more in-tune you are with knowing how important it is to get with your higher self to get things done. This is why is it so important to take care of yourself spiritually and protect yourself from those energies that are seeking to latch on to you for life, learn to shut them down before they attach themselves to you.

Turning Negative Into Positive

Most empathy have the natural ability to turn a negative situation into a positive one; they do not have to think about it; they just take action, which always seems to work in some way. They are very quick thinkers who allow their spirit to guide them, which they listen to, so the results you see around them are always positive or motivating and inspiring to find a way to work things out. The bottom line is that they are experts when it comes to finding the light in a dark situation, and also being positive in difficult situations when no one else can do so.

Helping Others Realize Their Worth

These are the kinds of people who make others aware of the light that they may not be aware that they have in their spirit. Many times, due to life experiences, negative interactions, and failed plans or goals, people give up hope, and their self-esteem goes away and they no longer feel worthy. If you do not have someone there to pick you up when you fall, help you laugh when you are feeling down, support you when you feel abandoned or to remind you that you are loved and worthy, you can become depressed and fall into a lifetime of stress and unhappiness. The empathy is that person who will always make you feel better because they are going to tell you that you are important, even if they do not know you personally, they will be able to tap into something about you, which will help them to connect with your spirit and see things.

Ease Suffering of Others

They are known as natural healers, usually, because they can make others feel better, and they are very skilled healing illnesses with home remedies, and they know exactly how and what to do to make things seem better. During the process, they are going to remain positive, inspiring, motivating, loving, and compassionate, which will automatically decrease the amount of suffering due to the level of mental and spiritual care that they provide. Things to do will come naturally to these individuals; they are never the ones who need to stop and think about how to handle a situation, most of the time, what needs to be done, is already in their spirit.

Challenges of an Empath

There are many challenges of being a spiritual person, one of which is

trying to balance trying to help someone heal, and taking on and owning the emotional experience that they are having. You have to be able to feel what they are feeling, without allowing those feelings to consume you and take over your energy, which will immediately cause you to feel drained. Most of the time, when this happens, you will feel extremely drained and tired, because you are now experiencing those negative effects and emotions of that person's experience. The key is to learn to balance between feeling the emotions and being taken over by them. This will get easier as time goes on, and you are consistent in practicing this skill. When you learn how to do this properly, you will find yourself feeling all of the emotions of the other person, but you will not be out of control emotionally, you will be able to remain calm so that you can assist them effectively.

Self-Sabotage

Depending on how awake they are, most people will do this to themselves. Our subconscious mind believes the things it is being told and takes everything in like a sponge. You must be able to recognize the energy of self-sabotaging, get to know that voice very well; otherwise, you may begin to allow those negative messages to affect you again. This self-sabotaging program has infiltrated every area of our life, the government, entertainers, our children, and all across-the-board. It has convinced some people that they need to carry out their punishment. This is why it is imperative that we unconsciously unplug from the collective reality and consciously plug into the abundance, which is heaven on Earth. People that are fully being restored to their natural programs, as humans are both good and bad, depending on what our primary operating system is telling us that we are at that moment.

The Good One

You have convinced yourself that you are the good one, and everyone

else has an evil streak in them. It takes a while to reverse this belief, and you will be successful when you stop passing judgment on everyone else and see yourself in them instead. Even those individuals who claim to be spiritual rather than religious are a form of ego suggesting that you are of a higher level. With the appropriate work, you will learn that you are not above anyone else. Many times, people use the word spiritual to gain immediate approval from others as being great individuals. This behavior may increase your status, get you a raise or enhance you socially, but it will not promote spiritual development or growth.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO LIVING YOUR LIFE AS AN EMPOWERED EMPATH

Empath Training

For the people who have not become unaware of their gift, or how to use it, this process can be very difficult and disturbing. This will be a reality when the empathetic individual has an experience that is directly related to a tragedy. There are many things that you can do to enhance your abilities and begin to live within your power. This will immediately increase your level of self-esteem as well as your confidence. You are going to feel extremely powerful when you can make use of all of your abilities that were meant for you to help others. There are different levels to this; you have the stage where you do not know why you think, feel and act that way that you do, you have a small feeling in your gut, but have no idea what it means. Once you start to get older, these senses will begin to intensify along with many of the other signs that will show that you are empathetic. The first step is realizing this; then you need to figure out what it means and how to manage it. You are going to need to become self-aware if this has not already happened in your life, self-awareness is imperative if you want to be able to master your emotions.

Enhancing Your Skills

This is something that can be learned; you just need to practice; one of the best ways to enhance your empathetic abilities is to challenge yourself and

try new things. Get in the habit of making quiet time for yourself; this is very important to do because it works like a refresher for your mind. Ask plenty of questions to expand your knowledge, make sure that you check in three other places for verification of the information that you have found. Try to control the way that you judge other people, slow down before you correct or critique another person, think of a way to inject kindness into the situation. You can also plan to take one day each week to work on your empathetic skills and training. This will be a very valuable asset to you because your skills are going to be enhanced now. Be mindful of the determinations of what you perceive to be happening when you are interacting with other people, tap into what you are truly feeling and sensing. You are wired with empathy, regardless of what happens to you or what you may be thinking. We all have mirror neurons, which are somewhat automatic sensing mechanisms that pick up on the emotions of other people. Meditation, connecting with nature, drinking plenty of water and keeping track of your dreams are all ways that you can increase your empathetic abilities.

Permanent Signs

These are the signs that are going to be present throughout your life no matter how much you train, work with towards being stronger in your abilities or develop your empathic abilities, these are those traits that you were born with. These signs will still be there even when you come into your full power; many of them will increase, and your gifts and abilities will become enhanced as well.

Temporary Signs

There is so much information out there, but it does not cover all that it means to exist on this earth as an empathetic being, there are some signs that you will display, which will decrease or eventually go away, as you get stronger.

These are known as temporary signs because they can disappear or diminish significantly when you come into your power, you will be able to manage your emotions and reactions at a higher level. These are those signs that only occur when they have not yet figured out what they are and what their truth is. When a person does not know their empathetic gifts, they will just reject those feelings and seclude themselves from other people. They will do this because they begin to notice that they only feel these negative emotions when they are around others. They will start to isolate themselves to avoid those negative feelings and emotions, which can be frightening until you are aware of what is going on. During those times before we start training to strengthen our empathy, these feelings and emotions will attach themselves to you, and you have no idea what is happening with you, it just seems that you are very depressed all of a sudden and you cannot shake that feeling. This is usually what causes most empathetic individuals to shy away from interacting with others, they begin running away, hiding, and creating a safe place where they can be all alone. While you are in the stage where you do not understand your empathic abilities, you feel as if you are getting beat up by these random emotions and thoughts that seem to come from nowhere. You will feel like someone is trying to poison you, and you have no control over those emotions or feelings, and now all of that energy has piled up on top of you. Trust me, once you realize what you are, the abilities you have and you finally come into your power, blocking those emotions will come easily for you.

Empath Healing

To heal, you are going to need to reverse the protection mechanism that you have built up. This means that you are going to have to revisit some of the bad things that may have happened to you. This is the reason that these people struggle so much because they do not deal with these things; they just ignore them and try to survive the best they can. The best way to begin to master this is to allow the memory to take place, take a moment to truly feel the emotion, then

release it. The key to doing this is to immediately think of a happy memory and replace negative or traumatic thoughts. It takes a while to master it, but after doing it for the first time, it will eventually begin to form a new habit for you. This will help you begin to look at things from a different perspective, and you will be able to keep yourself on track mentally. You need to get in touch with your navigation system, get in tune with your heart, which means allowing yourself to feel more not less. Meet your own needs fully, allow yourself to feel your emotions completely so that you can develop trust with yourself as well as the art of discernment. When you get to this point, you will no longer befall into that dangerous role of being codependent out here in this crazy world, you understand the power of choice and use it wisely.

Empathetic Stages

The Awakening Stage

When you go through a spiritual awakening, your thinking will change immediately. It will happen so quickly that you will be confused as to what happened to the beliefs that you just had. These mental changes will take place suddenly, and you will find yourself feeling different about life and thinking about specific things such as Chaos, something falls apart or life-threating accident. Something huge happens in the external environment and this is when you wake your ego loses the grip that it has on you. Now you finally realize that ego has never controlled anything and try to figure out what you were driven by all of this time. The spiritual awakening process is something that will be in the works for a lifetime because when it begins, there is no end; it is a constant process until you leave this earth. How intense the awakening process is will vary from person to person; many people go through quiet and calm periods, then something crazy and out of control seems to follow the calm. This is the beginning of your walk on the spiritual path; if you do not experience that spiritual awakening, you will live your life seeking power and money thinking this will bring happiness. Going through a spiritual awakening can be very

confusing and lonely during this time, but it is enlightening and beautiful as well. The time that your awakening occurs is not something that you will be aware of when it happens, it is very sudden and never expected. You will not even realize what is going on until much later on down the line. The spirits will come and crash the party that you think is your life and destroy what you thought you had planned. You do have any idea when it is time for your awakening, but unlike you, the spirits know exactly when to show up and take action. You can think about it in terms of getting dressed, to put on new clothes, you must take off the old ones first. That is the way the dark stage is about, getting rid of the old so that there is room for the new. The old must be stripped away to make way for the new. It is similar to being born, dying and being born again; it is a very difficult experience to go through because there is not much positivity around.

The key to getting through this stage is to be mindful of the fact that it is only a phase of your life, and it will fade away, and you will finally experience clarity and peace. During this time, you can expect to feel like God has forgotten about you because you have no idea of where to go or what you should do. You have begun to isolate yourself from everyone and everything that you were interested in. Not only are you going to be mentally drained, but you are also going to experience physical exhaustion as well. The sudden feeling of emptiness will have you searching for something and most likely, you will not have any idea what that is they are looking for. It is very common to question your purpose in life and feel as if you do not belong here while you are going through this period, so allow yourself to feel this way and it will eventually pass. Most of the unhappiness that you feel at this stage is because you are disgusted by all of the sufferings that are going on in the world.

eeling Stuck

There will be times during the spiritual awakening process when you become bored and tired of where you are and begin to need something deeper. There may be a resting period where you just need to be calm and wait for further instructions. But now that you are aware of what you are going through, you have become anxious and want to see results immediately or move to the next stage. You may not realize it, but this is the level that causes you to become more motivated to research things on another level. Just be patient and be still until your spirit tells you to move, trust in your ability to hear that voice when it speaks to you, and it will get louder as time passes.

Getting Through The Awakening

Surrender, do not fight or resist; many empathetic spirits can get impatient, upset, and defiant because they do not want to be in the dark stage; they want results or answers instantly. They are feeling tired of the whole process; they are drained, upset with God for the spiritual awakening, and wishing that they could just forget the whole thing. Your soul is programmed to awaken at a certain time; if you resist it, you will prolong the stages. The more you resist, the longer it will take for your soul to pull you along, it will take longer. Your spirit is going to be the winner, so just surrender to the process, working with mantras is a good idea, my soul knows what it is doing, I everything is going what it needs to I give up control of my soul I be willing to be soft say yes to your soul, and the stages will go faster. You are going the direction you were meant to go, because your spirit is stronger than your ego open and willing true art of surrender and says yes to your soul and where it wants you to go. There are so many confusions concerning spiritual awakening, someone may be walking in nature and experience a wonderful moment of connection, but it goes away quickly. That person will be totally confused, wondering why they have been gifted this power, but then lost it so quickly. This usually happens while you are still in the beginning stages of your awakening

and your level of consciousness has not begun to shift yet.

After The Awakening

After you go through your awakening stage, it is vital to explore all the different spiritual paths available to you, follow your heart and instincts, this will ensure that you choose a path that is in harmony with what you were called to do. This is the time that you should begin to practice working on your inner-self so that you can make sure that you continue growing, evolving, and keeping yourself grounded. The awakening stage has been known to make individuals feel as if their life has been turned upside down, so many of them suffer from depression and chronic anxiety. This is why self-care is so important; you are going through a lot mentally, physically and spiritually which can be a lot to process. Some people are never able to understand or process what is happening to them spiritually and their mental status never seems to recover from what they have experienced.

Bliss Stage

Coming alive, connected with everything around us, the world, people, feeling guided by spirit, feeling love at a stronger level, tapping into the quantum world, the spirit world is always trying to communicate with us, but we have to be awake to hear it, messages from angels, taken over by all of the beautiful emotions, intuition deepens, this is because the heart is waking up sometimes this can be the first time feeling the heart open up. Very beautiful stage, so good, that they do not want to leave this stage, not going to ever feel the negative emotions again

ark Stage

Where your soul brings up all of the things that need healing and released in this lifetime, most difficult stage, you may be healing things from past lives as well, because they may be holding you down, you soul is trying to move you from this, but it is being held down by these things that need to be healed. Ego blaster release things feel depression despair anxiety lost up, not sure at all, can feel as if you are dying your biology and genetics are all changing and being born again. Most empaths experience some form of the night, which can last up to years be patient if you are going through this, timing is correct, r spirit is getting you ready to purge, and you need to do this for your mind and body. When you go through this, it helps you get to where you need to be going to become completely new and different and will appreciate it for what it meant to your growth. Want to run and hide

Void Stage

Seems as if everything in life has stopped, you have purged all of that bad stuff and do not know quite what to do with yourself you are in between your old energy system and your new energy system between the old you and the new you, much anxiety, when you have no idea what you are going through the universe, closes doors on you so that you can emerge brand new, I am not getting messages anymore my communication stopped and wonder where all of the bliss and spiritual connection and connection with God (the resting stage) it wants you to rest so that you can get ready for the next stage do not fight it just be mindful of the fact that you are in the resting stage. You have done so much work healing, and you are extremely tired, so take this time to rest at deep peace because you know where you are and taking advantage of it, taking spiritual practices, so I can remain balanced when you are aware and you know you are in the void and work with the energy, but this is when you start to step into authentic power because all of the stuff that was holding you back is gone, this is when you get to know yourself truly and deeply not full power at first, it will build up looking at the new person in mirror, really coming into self, inner

power, standing on own two feet, working with it not against it

Grounded Stage

Pulled up like a tree growing up into the sky, by stage five, you have deep roots into the ground, at first we wanted to be excited all the time, not bliss stage like teenagers, first-time experiences. More mature now, grown-up, become spiritually and emotionally mature mindful of necessity of deeper routes, want to return to regular civilization because we are ready do not need to run from other types energies, so our sense of resilience is built up as roots go down, something else, energy system becomes more powerful, more powerful at manifesting, the deeper the roots, the more the tree can grow, you become magnetic. The connection with the spirits and with god has returned, but it is more connectedness feels more real, grounded, like actual everyday life, your heart is continuing to open, which increases your compassion. There is a great sense of feeling grounded as if there are no more worries, feeling protected, loved, and guided. You have grown these huge roots quickly which have now become very rooted in this reality so it is easier for you to now translate your spiritual understanding and spiritual truths.

Your Power

You need to come to an understanding that you have the empathic abilities to accept and take on emotions or feelings of someone, and you also have the power to decline those emotions. You will learn this with training and with experience, but I want to emphasize the word can, because you have a choice, it is not an automatic action that has to happen. You can control which emotions and feelings that you will allow into your spirit, most books and videos teach that you just take on these emotions without being able to control it, but that is not true. This is why it is so important to focus on enhancing your skills, taking your training seriously, so that you are well aware of how to use

your power and your gifts.

Becoming Self-Aware

Most empathetic individuals are extremely self-aware, some of them know who they are at a very young age, and can stand on that without allowing any influence or opinions from other people. They are very strong-minded, and always seem to know that they will admit, have no idea how or where they got that information from. If you are working on improving your skills, this is a great place to start, because you are going to need to know exactly who you are, how to control your reactions to emotional situations. When you truly know yourself, become comfortable with who you are, and fully accept it, this is when you will begin to help others. Self-awareness is what will help you to live in your truth; it is also the key to becoming emotionally intelligent, which includes mastering your emotions and controlling your reactions.

Mastering Social Skills

Learning to recognize your emotions, will help you in terms of interacting with other people, because knowing how to deal with your feelings, will allow you to read the body language of others. You will also be able to recognize the shifting of their emotions and their moods if you pay close attention while communicating with them. As the situations change, their body language and their energy will change as well, which you will be able to catch, as long as you are looking. This is where establishing a baseline is very important, especially if you are trying to get to know them, you want to get familiar with their normal reactions, facial expressions, and body language. Remember to stay consistent; this will become easier and more natural for you, the more that you do it, this should become a habit for you from now on. It is just like a muscle, just continue to build it up, make it stronger, and it will work wonders for you, it is another way of training your brain. It is going to be very

empowering to you when you begin to realize that you can tell when someone is lying to you, or when you can tell when someone needs help without needing to be told. If you are out there dating, this is a great skill to have, because you will be able to feel if someone is really into you, or if they are just trying to get a quick fix. When your empathic skills are at their highest level, most people will not even try to lie or deceive you because their energy will let them know immediately that you are not able to be fooled. This will turn many people off and make them not want to be around you, especially those who are habitual liars, those who are pretending to be something that they are not, they will know that you can see through them. Things like this will become more common, the stronger you get in your abilities, so it will bother you less and less you will expect it from certain individuals.

Emotional Protection

One of the ways that these individuals can keep their energy protected is not allowing themselves to remain in spaces that do not feel comfortable, and they will not keep company with people with negative energy. Many times, without realizing it, they will remove themselves from a situation or environment and not really know why they feel the need to go, but they will get out of there anyway. This is usually when someone has not come into their power or during the training stages when they are trying to improve and enhance their skills. Many times their spirit will not allow them to settle in a place where there are very sensitive to loud sounds and noises, a lot of chaos or drama because their nervous system is not set up for those types of things.

Second Brain

Experts have said that our stomach is our other brain located in the lower part of our bodies, it can connect with all of those pieces of information floating around, which you are not able to see with the human eye. The reality is

that your nervous system can sense and feel these things, so you need to make sure that you listen because it will never tell you the wrong information.

Ego

This is our sense of self; it is possessive because it experiences itself as separate from everything else. The ego thinks that it knows everything, but the spirit knows it all. Ego is constantly moving and trying to do something, while the spirit is eternally still. Your ego will want to keep you separate from certain people or individuals who it believes are beneath you or your lifestyle; most of the time, this comes from insecurity and fear. Your natural spirit has no fear or sense of separation; this is all games that your ego loves to get caught up in that whole you versus me thought process.

Silent Judgment

You may not say it out loud, but you believe on the inside that you are better than most, so instead of being spiritual, you become disconnected from other people. Many times this happens when you begin reading more spiritual information, join a religious group, or begin going to church again.

Inner Peace

As you take that control away from your ego, you will no longer be held prisoner by anger, temptation, stress, and constant anxiety. This is when you finally feel as if everything in your world is ok, and it does not matter what may be going on in your life at the time. You are very serious about your spirit at this point, and you are not interested in playing around with fake spiritual philosophies or preachers who have no feeling in their delivery. You feel complete for the first time and you are into meditating, mindfulness, exercise

and taking your health very seriously. When you are in a natural happy place in your spirit, you are emotionally stronger, truly engaged with people and the world, and you are living your truth in a peaceful place. You are no longer fighting the nature of what your life is supposed to be; this is where you have finally accepted things for what they are and moving on with life.

Honesty

If you were already an honest person, you would become even more brutally honest with yourself as you get stronger within your gift. You are not going to be able to stand to play any type of game, pretending in any way, and you will never again compromise who you are or what you want in life. You have now become more responsible and hold yourself accountable for your actions, and now you make it a point to operate with integrity. You have to be authentic and truthful at all times; this is a priority and faking is not something that you can do; it makes you sick to your stomach. Being honest is not only good for the soul, but it is also great for your relationships and the connections that you will build in life. It pays to be honest; the rewards come in so many ways, one of which is being secure in knowing that you have nothing to hide. If someone has asked you to join them for coffee and you do not want to go, but instead of saying no, you agree to meet with that person. During the entire conversation, and even the next day, something inside of you is saying no and that you do not want to go. You may not know why you are feeling that way, but the immediate response in your brain was no, but you will override that feeling for fear of hurting their feelings. You have got to work on getting yourself out of this dangerous habit because you will consistently end up in situations that you do not want to be in. If this person happens to be in the same room with someone who has a demon with them, it will drain them because they are going to have to transmute that negative energy. This can happen constantly, which is why it is very important to protect your energy, but it is also caring about yourself, about your own emotions and becoming meticulous with caring about the way that you

are feeling.

Guilt

You will automatically feel a tremendous amount of guilt when you wake up. This is because when you were not conscious of your behavior, you had no reason to feel any type of guilt. Be mindful, that this is not shameful guilt, showing up because of something bad you have done, this is a way that your conscience can make the corrections it needs to make within you.

Sharing Your Awakening With Others

Many people are very excited about their awakening once they realize what it is, some of them are so overjoyed that they want to tell everyone they love. You need to be very selective when sharing this type of information about yourself since your sensitivity level is very high during this time; you are vulnerable. The best way to make this decision is to be sure that you are in your power first so that you are mindful of how to protect your energy. You must make sure that those who you choose to share this with are awake themselves or at least mindful and possibly currently going through the process themselves. When the people around are spiritually aware or conscious of human beings, they will have a basic understanding of what you are going through, while those with no knowledge of the spiritual world will not. If an individual is not yet awake themselves, they may project onto you their negative beliefs of what is happening to you, and their opinions may throw you off a little bit. You do not need any distractions or possible negative energies around during your awakening stage. This is already a very intense stage in your life where you will feel a little bit lost, uninspired and alone. Deciding to share your awakening with others can be a good idea depending on where the person is spiritually in their own life. If they are not in a place where they are at least mindful of the process and you make comments about dancing to the universe or connecting with the

spirits, this will push them away. It will also make them believe that you are having mental issues and they will want for you to go and get some professional help. There will be a variation of things going on in their minds because they are not spiritually awakened yet so they do not understand what is happening. You may even try to explain certain things to them, but if they are not in the correct place spiritually, it will still seem crazy to them. Most of them will probably tell you that you need to see some kind of specialist because that is the only solution they can come up with within their minds. Depending on their personality, they may just come right out and say that you are crazy and the things you speak about sound insane. You will be accused of suffering from serious depression, or that you are going through a midlife crisis and anything else that makes sense in the minds of others. Keep in mind that you are very vulnerable and open like never before during this time, and you do not need anyone projecting any misbeliefs that can harm you. If you are in a relationship, your partner is close to you so they are going to notice that something is going on with you and eventually want answers, so you will need to share this with them. Just be mindful of the words you use and the way that you explain it because the average person has no idea about these kinds of things. You just need to know the right time, the correct way to present the information so that you do not scare them or push them away. At this point, you only want to participate in things that will help you move forward in your spiritual awakening faster instead of things or people that will hinder you.

Ask yourself is are the people around you are aware and awake or if they even have a basic understanding of what goes on during this time. If you have these individuals around, that is amazing, so yes, share this special time in your life with them. When you are blessed with the support of someone who may be on their spiritual path, this can make your journey easier and even more interesting. You will have the privilege of having someone close to you who can offer advice and share their story as well as explain certain stages to you. Unfortunately, most people do not have a lot of people around them with awareness, so if you do have these special individuals close to you, take advantage of their presence in

your life. Share your stories with them as much as possible; you should spend plenty of time with them as well. If the people around you are not in this place, take some time before you share this awakening with them until you are feeling stronger and are secure in your power.

There is going to come a time when spiritual awakenings are so common that everyone is going to know about them, and there will be a universal understanding of how to support each other during a spiritual awakening. We have not come to that point as of yet. Unfortunately, the majority of people on the planet are still not awake or aware of what goes on. This process is usually mistaken for a mental illness, a nervous breakdown, or a midlife crisis; there have been many different terms used to describe it. There have been many instances where the partner or family member of the empath has advised them to consider medication and this suggestion was taken. The empathy went to a doctor, expressed what was happening and was quickly placed on some kind of antidepressant. Now your awakening process has been prolonged and it will take longer than necessary which will slow down the natural flow of your abilities.

Empath Support

You are already seeking out support by simply taking one small step and purchasing this book; you are already mindful that you are going to need support to assist you with your gift. By now, you have come into your power, so it is time to begin to start your journey of educating and supporting by sharing your story with others. If you do not have spiritually awake people in your life, that is fine. You can share your experiences with strangers if necessary. As long as you are out there trying to connect with others like you, sharing your story and helping other empathy understand their journey, you are on the right track. Your focus should be on finding support, whether it is watching videos, reading

books, downloading e-books and whatever else you need to do to find support and expand your knowledge. There is a community of these people out there and we are slowly being universally connected which is cool so remember to seek out those who may be going through the same experiences so that you can support each other. This is a great way to ensure that you are not being influenced by people who are not awakened at the time, to keep you protected from their beliefs while you are open and vulnerable.

No tolerance for those who criticize other people; there is a natural belief that everyone deserves a break, and most people are out here doing the best that they can. This type of thinking is the reason so many empathetic people feel so much lighter than everyone else; they are free, full of hope and very optimistic about the world. No patience for anyone who is deceitful or pretending to be someone other than who they are and you are not able to tolerate any type of games because you can see things now.

Awakenings are difficult, but as soon as it is over, your energy is more stable. You feel more in touch with your power and have an idea as to how to manage it. Now there is no need to r run away from people or places any more thanks to coming to terms with your awakening. The whole process was to prepare you so that you could exist in regular everyday life and bring the light of spirit with you wherever you go. You are not here to run away and live a secluded, isolated lifestyle; you were meant to bring spiritual awakening to others on the planet. As soon as you come out of the awakening process, you are more stable in your power, and you know that you can influence the energies around you. Before you woke up, you always felt the need to leave the environment where the energy was negative, but now you know how to block it. You still feel the need for deep peace and your quiet time, but you are not into the habit of isolating yourself from people anymore, that is the difference. Your ability to manage your emotions and deflect energies is amazing and gives you much confidence knowing that you have that kind of power. Being mindful of what to do for

yourself to calm down when you are feeling anxious, nervous or even worried about certain things in your life is an exceptional skill to have.

Surrender

The best way to come into your power is to surrender to the process. Allow yourself to surrender to God, the planet, and your spirit guide so that your heart is all the way opened up. Once you begin to surrender, you make room for the spiritual process to continue, and you will become deeper in your thoughts and your feelings. The fear you consistently feel will instantly go away as you are now powerful enough to reframe the thoughts that were causing you to be afraid. The fear will still show up the difference will be the time that it lasts within your mind; it will go away much quicker now that you are aware. Once again, the best way to combat that fear is to identify the thought that is causing the fear very quickly, take a deep breath and then move on. The key is to allow yourself to feel the emotion and then you can go in and replace the thought that is causing it. Your life moves into a new cycle where your energy field is stronger and more magnetic, meaning that things generally happen more quickly to you. The manifestation process goes faster synchronicities pop up more often and quicker than ever before thanks to that magnetic energy. You are now able to withstand those negative and hash energies that made you run and hide before the spiritual awakening that you have experienced. I have heard of cases where the person kept themselves isolated for up to ten years before having a breakthrough in their spirit. Once you start to engage and interact with people regularly, your energy will get stronger and stronger. You should be able to go anywhere you want to go once this process is completed because you know that your purpose is to carry your light into those dark places and let it shine. You are still going to be emotionally sensitive but your energy field has become more stabilized so you can block those nasty energies.

What to Do After Awakening

The first thing you do is keep doing what you have been doing; this is very important to remember so that you do not forget about those small basic things you have done. You must continue with all of the spiritual practices that you were doing all along. You do not want to stop just because you woke up. These are the small things that got you where you are, and you are going to need them to stay in your power and master those abilities. As you move through life you may go through different cycles of life, we go up and we go back down again, that is what life is all about. There are so many quantum changes that you are going through; just remember life is all about ups and downs so stay prepared for these changes to come your way. There is no steady line going upward or straight across, life is messy and things will never be perfect, so learn to rise above those negative thoughts and replace them. The other important thing you need to do is get out of the way and stay out of the way because all of these changes are occurring by the command of your soul and higher self. You may not even really notice many of the changes, you may be feeling things, but you are still trying to take everything in and process it. You are not going to be in control of these things or any spiritual change that occurs on the quantum level; it happens right at that moment in that world. Quantum change occurs within the spiritual components of what you see and what you cannot see and these changes occur immediately. What happens when you go through all of these spiritual changes you find there are plenty of old thought patterns hanging around trying to get into your mind. This can be a difficult time while you allow your brain time to start rewiring itself because it can take a long time, sometimes a few years.

Refocus

It is very common for you to be going on with your day feeling great, and then a negative thought pops into your head, but this is where the skill of

refocusing comes in. You need to be good at positive self-talk and making sure that you do not fall into the pit of negativity and darkness. Remain compassionate and focused when you spot the negative thought, refocus immediately and shift your mind to a more positive place and stay there for a few moments. When you take the time to refocus, it is so important because it tells the brain to find the changes that occurred and locate them. Pay close attention to what your mind is thinking and then immediately you are going to refocus your mind on something else, this gets easier the more that you practice it. Another great way to combat this is to write those bad thoughts down in a journal; it is another form of releasing that negative energy and get rid of those thoughts. There are a few mantras that can help you get to deal with those quick mental interruptions that occur very often. You can tell yourself that you have infinite abundance, all is okay, you receive everything that you need and the most powerful one is that you are exactly where you are supposed to be. This is another refocusing exercise that will force your mind to think about something else and your brain will begin to repeat those new thoughts back to you. This is the process of the brain laying down neural networks where you have to have a point of focus and then your brain rewires itself to focus on something else. Another way to look at is like starting a new habit, the more you practice it, the easier it becomes for you.

Keep Energy Moving

When you are walking in your power and realize your empathetic abilities, you also need to make sure that you keep your energy moving as much as possible. There are many easy and natural ways to go about this. You can exercise when you wake up in the morning, go for a walk or run, anything to get the blood flowing. You do not need to have elaborate spiritual practices or special work-our plans, just figure out a way to keep the energy moving. You can move energy with like Tai Chi or Chi Kong, which is a great way to get the energy moving, actually dancing is one of the best ways to accomplish this. You

can come up with some very creative ways to move your body; there does not have to be any skill or talent involved, just get moving. I will turn on my music and just go hard for a while when you do that it feels like you have just dumped all of your emotions into the ocean. You feel so free afterward and your mind is automatically focused on what you can do next to continue the feeling of freedom that you are experiencing. The best time to move your energy is as soon as you get out of bed in the morning; it is a wonderful way to keep moving energy throughout the day. You can develop many small daily routines to assist you, stand tall, close your eyes and visualize a light shower falling onto your body. This is literally like a shower but it is made out of light instead of water and is coming over your head down to the bottom of your feet. Take a moment to visualize all of the stuff that needs to change or completely go away and come up with creative ways to make that happen for yourself.

Meditation before you go to work in the morning or anything that you can do to make sure that your energy is moving, and you only need to do it a few minutes a day. There is no need to spend an hour in the morning doing this; you can use up about twenty minutes of your day and then get on with your business.

The New You

Many people assume that because they experienced this major awakening, that cycle had ended just they can just go back to their usual lives, and everything will be okay. First of all, you will never be able to go back to living the way that you did before your awakening and nothing is going to be the same for you. You feel much deeper, you even think on a much deeper level and you love much harder than you did before. Another thing to realize is that your spiritual hygiene is just as important as physical hygiene; you take a shower every day so you need to clean your spirit daily as well. Your spiritual hygiene continues to be important even after your spiritual awakening takes place so keep in mind to move that energy daily; it is just that simple. You need to reinforce your commitment to continuing deepening my awareness while also

continuing to being of service. Use those daily mantras to set your intentions and send them to the universe multiple times a day; this is a good way to stay committed to your spiritual training. You have made a promise to yourself to never close your heart down again especially when the ego is trying to shut down because of some sort of pain.

This may happen in your outer environment, no worries, just pause, take a deep breath, and tap on your chest while stating that you commit to the process and will not ever shut down or check out again. Keep opening up to life and to the practice of remaining open and make a decision not to close down no matter what happens. Stay open, surrendered sensitive, and vulnerable. This is the way to live so continue to make this kind of commitments in your life even after your spiritual awakening ends.

Spiritual Emergency

This is a highly disruptive spiritual process that occurs in your mind, body, and your soul, and it is so rapid and dramatic that it will disturb your entire life. It could be an outside event or something that happened in your life which brings on this emergency. Some women say they experienced this during childbirth; others said it was due to the loss of a loved and some say it occurred because they lost an important relationship. Going through the loss of your job, an accident, a life-threatening disease or near-death experience can also cause you to go through this. It is something so destructive that it changes your whole world and disrupts your day-to-day life.

There are two distinguishing characteristics between a spiritual emergency and spiritual awakening, the intensity and the period. Many people will use this term when things get so severe that they are not able

to handle what they are experiencing. Many times the emergency will come on so suddenly that you do not even have time to figure out what has happened unless you are skilled. You can be in meditation and without even knowing what is going on and your energy circulated through you from one minute to the next, so when you open your eyes, and your entire world had completely changed. Now you are so confused and unable to explain how it is possible that some kind of Quantum Leap happened during your spiritual emergency and shifted your life views and your reality. This is something that usually happens and ends very quickly while the awakening can last for years. The process that you go through during a spiritual awakening is very intense. A spiritual emergency takes a spiritual awakening and turns the volume up. The spiritual emergency is so much more intense than a general awakening; when you are in a spiritual emergency, you feel like your life is just falling completely apart in every way possible. You want to get to a point where you can discern whether you are going through a spiritual awakening or a spiritual emergency.

Let's say that you are going through a spiritual emergency and you call up your best friend who is not at all spiritual so they will have no idea what is going on with you. Now you begin to let them know that you can access memories from your past lives, and you have begun talking to your angels. The first thing they are going to do is ask if you are feeling ok, then they will most likely offer you the number to their therapist or psychiatrist. Most likely, you do not need therapy because you are not having a mental breakdown or anything like that, so be mindful of the advice you take.

This is what we discussed earlier, the perception or fear of someone else could be projected onto you, and you may believe it. This can cause so much damage and make things so much worse, simply because of being uneducated. I know of situations where the empathetic person ended up locked in a psych ward on a seventy-two-hour hold and end up being admitted to a

mental hospital and heavily medicated. This is no joke, so please be careful who you share this information with so you do not end up somewhere out of commission and sedated.

Quick Change

During a spiritual emergency, there will be a period where you will experience a complete and rapid shift in the way that you see reality. Most of the time, it is so quick that it becomes very jarring and extremely frightening for the person going through this. They usually have no idea what they are feeling, so naturally, they will not have any idea why they are having these emotions. I have heard multiple stories where the individual may be meditating and when they open their eyes, there is a sudden connection to the spirit world. Within a second and without any notice, they are immediately affected by hundreds of emotions and issues going on in the world. When you are becoming connected with the spiritual world, these types of things happen very quickly; most of the time it occurred in a fraction of a second. Not only is this difficult to understand and process, but you are also extremely overwhelmed by that sudden change in your spirit. This has caused many of them to shy away from meditation or any kind of relaxing mind therapy as they are afraid to experience that immediate thrust of different emotions into their spirit. The fact that they had no idea how to handle something as emotionally massive as this, the experience has sent them further into seclusion. So the key here is to be mindful of the things that you may have to endure in order to get closer in touch with your abilities and come into your power. If you have already gone through these things, this should help you to understand what is happening to you. You will be able to prepare yourself for other symptoms that may show up during your experience. It is going to have a huge impact on your entire life and it will seem as if your whole world is severely impacted in a negative way. These thoughts and feelings are natural and they will pass with time as you become stronger and learn how to manage things during this time. This is what you will need to focus on from now until the end

of your life. Many people have decided that they need to quit their jobs suddenly during this process and they would do so without a second thought. This is because they are listening to and trusting their spirit guides and they feel safe and secure following what they are led to do. You may also notice that you can no longer be around certain people due to the fact that you are able to see directly into their spirit and you can tell who they really are. Many of those who have been around you for the most part of your adult life will probably be the ones that you cut off suddenly. This is the time that you realize that they never served any purpose in your life, they are not supportive and many of them have no desire to help others. Being of assistance to others is a huge part of your personality, so you cannot tolerate those individuals who come off as heartless and cold or have no meaning about themselves.

There is a small period of depression that takes place where the person complains that they are not even able to get out of bed or do simple things like shower, eat, and bathe. This is how debilitating they can temporarily feel during this time, but the good thing is it will not last too long, so it is manageable. When they are severely impacted by this, their lives become too difficult to maintain, and participating in normal activities of everyday life seems impossible. There are millions of us going through spiritual awakenings and we can still maintain somewhat of a normal life; we can continue to hold our job, keep making money and living a regular life. There are some cases where it is so overwhelming to that person and they are not able to get up and go about their day. They just want to stay in bed with the covers over their heads.

You now have rapid and unlimited access to universal consciousness, which means that you basically connect with the mind of God, which makes you feel like you have this downpour of love falling onto you. This can be very overwhelming because you are going to begin to receive an enormous amount of information that you will not be sure what to do with or how to process it. There are just too many thoughts, facts, and thousands of other

random things running through your mind and this can be exhausting. When your system opens up that quickly and so dramatically that it is almost like the whole world is trying to take over your brain. This rapid download of information can be very frightening for people; even if they do understand what is happening, it is a lot to try and take in while it is going on. Now you start to feel that you have more knowledge; you know about the nature of reality and have access to a deeper truth. You have first-hand knowledge about the way things truly work, about the world, events that have taken place and the things that our government has lied about. This can be very stressful for you because, unlike the rest of the world, you cannot run away and hide from what the truth is; it lives within you now. Your brain is constantly receiving information whether you think that you are ready for it or not; it just keeps coming at an alarmingly high rate.

The Second Coming

You may experience what is called the God syndrome when you tap into universal consciousness very frequently what happens is the mind starts to receive all this information, and the ego begins to interpret it as you having the mind of God. Many people say that they all of a sudden began to feel as if they were Jesus, Buddha, or another popular world leader who had a super special mission to complete. They actually believe that they are the only ones who will be able to complete this mission and were sent to do just that as well as to save the world. Some of them actually believe that they will be around to witness the second coming of Jesus because of what they believe they have seen in the spirit world. This is why the ego is able to take over at this point; there is so much information that has been made available the ego makes them believe that they are special. This is an over inflation of your ego that will eventually quiet down. This may happen slowly as you begin to understand this is part of the process and you are not actually Jesus or Buddha. You are not here as the second coming, but you are here to do something very special and you need to tap into

the right energies so you can be aware of what that is. Your ego will begin to quiet down and you will no longer have these delusions of grandeur anymore and this is when the understanding of your true mission can begin. You do have a very unique purpose and mission to be accomplished, but your ego needs time to deflate a little bit so that you can become more humble. In reality, the mind of God is not arrogant at all and there are no delusions of grandeur in the mind of God, so this god syndrome is something that is common during a spiritual emergency. When you begin to feel overwhelmed from these thousands of downloads, take a nice, slow, deep breath and recognize that your ego has been interpreting being connected to universal consciousness in the wrong way.

Medical Mistakes

When you experience altered states of consciousness, this is really common when you are experiencing a spiritual emergency. Your system can open up so quickly that you begin to have immediate contact with the spirit world. This allows you access to different levels of consciousness, you are able to speak to spirit guides, and you have the ability to channel all types of information from the universe. Multiple things can be happening to you during this time, you can be talking to angels and you will have the ability to access and converse with departed loved ones. There have been thousands of empathetic individuals who have stated that during this stage, they are able to experience different timelines as well. You will also access memories that may be from your current life or they could be from multiple past lives that you have lived in different times. The difficult thing about this part of the process is that those memories can sometimes be very horrific so the emotions attached to them will have a serious negative effect on you. You are going to have to experience the feelings and emotions all over again which can cause temporary trauma, but the good news is that you are aware and mindful of what may happen. The downside of this is the reality that most people end up in a therapist or doctors' office trying to figure out why they have this mental breakdown. The reason they

believe they have this breakdown is because of what they were told by their friends and family. This is the only definition the friends and family could come up with because they have do not understand the spirit world. This is why it is imperative to be mindful of when is a good time to share your awakening with other people and who you should tell. When they finally admitted the things that they were thinking and feeling, those individuals immediately suggested the empathetic person go and seek medical attention. Out of frustration and hopelessness, they end up sitting in front of a doctor trying to explain the things that have been going on in their mind and how they have not been able to sleep at night. Many doctors already believe they know what is going on when they hear the symptoms of these individuals, so they have a consistent plan in place for these types. Depending on the doctor you visit, and how much information you give them, they might actually place you on a ninety day psyche hold. During this time, they are going to want for you to go through a mental evaluation so they can determine if the person is going to need ongoing psychiatric care. Certain doctors have spiritual awareness to they have a basic understanding of what some of these patients are trying to explain, but this is only a few. Most of them will go the route of mental evaluations and psyche medication because this is what they are familiar with. Western society has been known to mistake visions for hallucinations while making sure these individuals are heavily medicated which only makes them worse. Unfortunately, the western modern world is not prepared to offer assistance to those who experience spiritual emergencies because they will only see it as a mental illness. The most common misdiagnosis for experiencing altered states of consciousness is psychosis hallucinations when they are actually communicating with their spirit guides. Even in the area of transpersonal psychology, they tend to make the same types of mistakes in terms of the symptoms for psychosis.

Both Sides

This is something else that seems to take these individuals by storm.

They finally accept that they are able to access all of these beautiful and amazing things. They are feeling so special and blessed they want to let everyone know how wonderful it is to be connected to this world. Then there is the other side of this, which is much darker and can be extremely horrifying. Not only are you able to access those wonderful things your spirit is also connecting with the darker spirits that are out there. This means that they may be able to see all kinds of demons and spirits with very ugly intentions, so this side quickly brings you into reality very quickly. Now you realize this access can actually expose you to some of the darkest things in which you could have never even imagined. There is a light at the end of this tunnel, so be mindful of the fact that this stage is something that you will be able to work through with time.

Talents and Gifts Flourish

This stage also happens very rapidly, and it is where your spiritual gifts and your talents just flourish very quickly. All of a sudden, the things that you seemed to be good at, you are now exceptional at them. This can be a very exciting time for you as your spiritual gifts that you already have will tend to explode and become much more intense. During this time, you may also begin to discover your gifts if you were not already aware of them. Like I stated earlier, this will happen very quickly; remember the time frame that goes along with spiritual emergencies is very short. Everything happens faster so they can flourish or they can spontaneously move from one moment to the next. One minute you were not aware that you had this talent, and within two seconds, your spirit informs you that you are gifted. Now all of a sudden you have this ability and are not quite sure what to do with it because you are not even sure if all of this is real or not. I had a friend who went through an emergency and in a split second, she realized that she was able to channel healing energies from her hands. This was not something that she had been aware of before that moment and it frightened her at first. Fortunately, she was aware of her empathetic abilities but was not emotionally mature enough to take full advantage of those

skills.

Gift of Sight

Some have called this their third eye, while others who may be more religious, have been known to refer to it as the Seeing Eye. They believe those who are blessed with this were sent here by God to spot demons. The empathetic individuals who have spoken about this gift openly have all stated that they are able to view see auras around people, or they can detect electromagnetic fields around certain things. An unskilled individual who had spiritual gifts flourish in an instant will be terrified, especially if they have no idea of the spirit world. This has caused many to feel as though they were suffering from temporary insanity, due to the fact that they have all of a sudden began to see things around people everywhere they go. This is also another stage that has caused many to go into isolation because they are feeling all of these crazy emotions or seeing bright colors around people they come into contact with. Empathetic individuals have different levels of gifts, while most of them display a cluster of abilities, meaning they have all of the gifts. This can also be frightening because their awareness usually happens, so suddenly, they do not have time to process what has happened. One minute you do not have any spiritual gifts at all then out of nowhere, you suddenly possess all of these special abilities and gifts with the power to use them. If you are not a spiritual person, this can cause some temporary mental issues; you are probably going to be in a state of denial at first. Just take a moment to imagine this happening to someone who has no idea about being spiritual or even worse, someone who was not taught about God. Think about it; you are just sitting at home minding your business and watching TV, then all of a sudden you find yourself able to connect to the spirit world. You would be scared out of your mind and probably hesitant to tell anyone at first out of disbelief.

Spiritual awakenings and emergencies are happening all over the world; unconscious material is coming to the surface during the stages of these events. When you are going through a spiritual emergency, your unconscious mind starts to dump out all of its contents, and that includes everything from all of your lives, past and present. Your unconscious mind stores everything that has ever happened to you, not just in this lifetime but from all of your previous lifetimes. The reason that it brings all of these things to the present is so that you can be healed and come into awareness of your conscious mind. Many times what happens is the unconscious material that you had no recollection or memory of will suddenly appear in your memory. This is your spirit's way to ensure that this necessary healing takes place. I have had people who shared with me that during their spiritual emergency, they suddenly remembered that they were sexually molested. Others reported that they started having flashbacks out of nowhere reminding them of something else horrible they experienced during their childhood. More spiritually mature individuals have spoken about actually having direct access to their past lives which horrified them to the point of checking themselves into a mental facility. Even though they were mature and well aware of the gifts and power, they still were not able to handle the reality of what they had to endure in that past life.

This is where the damage can be done; some people eventually place themselves at the mercy of a medical doctor who may not understand the spirit world at all. This usually ends up in disaster, and the empathetic individual never fully coming into their power at all and living a life on psychotic medications they do not need. This is the reality of what happens more often than not; it can turn out very sad for these special individuals who were sent here to assist the rest of the world.

xtreme Mood Changes

It is very common for an empathetic individual to be completely happy one moment, and the very next, they can be feeling extremely down and depressed. Their intense emotional states can change so quickly that they do not even have time to adjust or understand what is occurring. They will have people in their faces yelling about the fact that they just completely changed up and want to know why you are behaving that way. Most of the time, you will be in a state of confusion so you will not be able to provide them with the answer that they want. During these mind-blowing quick shifts between emotions, that individual will be very lost, feeling ungrounded and unsure of what to do with themselves. The biggest part of their confusion is trying to figure out how they could feel so happy one minute and then feel as if their life was over in the next moment. This is when the unconscious mind is spilling out content and your emotional body is doing the same thing simultaneously. All of that hidden emotional content that has been repressed is now being pushed to the surface so that it can be dealt with accordingly. Keep in mind; this content may be from your current life or one that you have lived previously, which explains all of the different emotions attached to the experience.

Strange Physical Symptoms

There have been stories of empathetic individuals reporting that they feel energy buzzing all over the place no matter where they go. Others have stated that their body will actually vibrate as they feel waves of energy moving from the top of their body to the bottom of their feet. I have also heard of stories where the individual would get goosebumps all over their body whenever they would come into contact with a spiritual presence. Some people had even said that their body would fill up with intense heat when they intense heat during the moment they were receiving information, while others reported very bad aches and pains. These symptoms would come out of nowhere, and all with them became all kinds of different emotions and thoughts. It is not uncommon for these individuals to end up actually getting diagnosed with serious physical

medical conditions during this time. The body breaks down when you are experiencing a spiritual emergency so it makes sense for your system to react in a negative way and become vulnerable. This brings us back to the medicine factor after the physical diagnosis they were prescribed western medicine that they do not need. The pain they experienced was due to the constant mental stress caused by the stages of their spiritual emergency.

You Can Survive

If you are wondering if you are strong enough to survive a spiritual emergency, do not worry, you will make it through this challenging time. Just keep in mind, even though it may be very intense, it is only going to last for a very short time period. There are a few ways to help you remain calm during this survival mode.

Calm Your Fear

When you have so much going on in your life, with everything moving so quickly, this can be very disruptive and overwhelming for you, which can breed fear. Going through spiritual emergencies can bring about chronic stress and anxiety to the person. Since you are reading this book, it should provide you with some insight so you will at least be aware of what is happening to you. This will lessen the amount of fear that you feel since you have learned how to work through this since you are educating yourself on the topic. You may begin to have panic attacks and anxiety all types of things due to the fact that your system is going through a difficult process. Adding fear on top fear is a very dangerous thing to do to yourself; it is one of the most toxic emotions for the human nervous system to take in and process. This negative emotion was not made to be in our bodies for too long since our bodies were not built to withstand stress for extended periods of time. Our precious nervous systems are very sensitive to stress and fear so it is essential for you to do your best to calm the fear down and

try to soothe yourself.

The paragraph that you just read should already be assisting you with the process of truly calming down. The fact that you have a basic understanding of being empathetic will automatically bring on a soothing feeling into your system, which will calm you down. In addition to that, you have been exposed to many tips and suggestions that will help you manage your abilities and come into your power. The best thing to do is to be mindful of those things that helps you to relax and practice that as much as you possibly can. Even when you may not necessarily need to calm down, making it a habit to practice these things for consistent self-care. You can get away with a nice hot bubble bath, meditation, exercising, or just taking an hour to be still and think. Positive self-talk works really well during this period as well, you can remind yourself that you are not crazy, you are not seeing things and you are definitely not mentally ill.

Detach

Hours of meditation, plenty of mindfulness, and consistent repetition, and eventually, you will have mastered the skill of being able to observe from a distance. It is all a matter of perception and learning how to remain still in the middle of a storm and be able to calm others down as well. Learn to look at things from a distance think of it like you are moving to the back row in a movie theater, you are still watching the movie, but you are not right up in front of the screen. Whatever is happening and the image that is in your head had a tremendous effect on you when you were close to it, but moving further back changed the intensity level. Since you are now watching the same thing from further away the way it triggers your emotions are completely different and this is a good way to view your self-care. The idea is to practice observing your thoughts and watching them from a distance; this will have an impact on the way that you respond to those thoughts.

hose disturbing thought forms will continue to show up, and the best thing to do is practice observing the thoughts from a distance. This will help you remain focused. When these thoughts begin to surface, they can be very disorienting, and they make no sense, but it is not important for them to make sense. The key is to acknowledge them, view them from a distance and then let them go. You will feel the urge to try and figure things out but you need to resist that temptation and wait for the answers to come naturally. Your frustration level is starting to rise as your mind wants to know why these emotions can suddenly appear but the answers seem to take so much longer to surface. Once again, this is just your ego trying to come in and take control over the process, but you need to keep that ego in check and out of the way of your progress.

Converse

During this difficult process, positive self-talk is very effective, and you need to have consistent conversations with yourself, the universe and God. This is the time that you want to trust that your spirit guides are working in your favor and they know what is best for you. The more you connect to them and listen the more you quicker you will be able to hear what they are saying to you.

Now we are going to revisit the idea of observing from a distance; this is not only about moving back on a physical level; you must learn to remove yourself mentally as well. You do not want to be in an emotional space where you are looking at the movie and feel like taking off your shoe and throwing it at the screen. You need to be in a place where you are able to look at whatever is on that screen and not allow it to affect you emotionally; this will take work but can be mastered. I understand that this may all seem foreign to you, but you do not need a detailed explanation because that is when your ego thinks it can slide back in. The ego will feel like you are stroking it when you continue to seek for answers that are going to come naturally in the time designed by the universe. This is why it is so important to keep that ego in the back of the closet where it

belongs so it does not slow down your progress by trying to take control. It can have a very negative effect on you when these horrible emotions just spring up out of nowhere, but you need to try and exercise patience. Be mindful that it is possible to observe things, absorb emotions and not be consumed by any of it since you are able to control your reactions. Have faith that you will receive the information that you need in order to make it through this frightening stage of your life. You should be good at observing everything that happens in your internal environment without becoming involved or attached to it no matter what it is. Whether it is a thought or a feeling, you need to allow yourself to feel it then move on and let it go.

Stay Grounded

Keep yourself grounded as much as possible; this is the solid base that you will always be able to stand on. Find places and objects that make you feel calm and relaxed. For many people spending time in nature is a great way to feel grounded. The more time you spend in nature and focused on the things that God put here for us to take advantage of, the more free your mind will become. I know of someone who will go outside and literally sit with her eyes closed and hold onto different types of rocks for hours and hours. This is what makes her feel fulfilled and calm as well; she loves to take time to get familiar with all of the different textures of the rocks. I know another person who likes to go to the beach and spend hours sifting the sand through their fingers, and this makes them feel more connected with nature. Both of these individuals had no idea why they felt the need to do these things, but they surrendered and continued them anyway. Later on, they would learn exactly why they were doing those things and they found great pleasure knowing that they were actually strengthening their empathetic abilities. There is no need to try and come with something that is too elaborate; just do something very simple. It could be smelling flowers, grabbing rocks or picking leaves from a tree. These things sound and seem small but believe me, having this type of knowledge can make a world of difference

when you are going through a spiritual emergency. It is imperative to find a way to keep yourself grounded with things like meditation and exercise thanks to this book; you have discovered a few other ways to help keep yourself grounded.

Your Five Senses

Your five senses are crucial when it comes to grounding yourself, using these senses that are naturally built into us in order to interpret 3D reality. When you make it a conscious decision to use those five senses and put your 6th Sense to the side for a little bit, this helps you to stay grounded. The act of sifting sand through your fingers or squeezing rocks to observe texture can be very soothing and grounding for someone. It is all a matter of taking self-inventory and find out what works for you and what does not, everything is not for everyone. The thought of squeezing rocks may sound strange to you, but another empathetic person may think that it is an excellent idea that they plan to try out. Tactile information can be very grounding, so I would suggest you try it out in one way or another. You can simply place put your hands in the earth, feel the dirt, pick through the field of grass or you could even go and pick up rocks and hold them in your hand. These are just a few suggestions and tips; there are so many ways that you can connect with nature, heaven and the earth. Another way I have heard about is spending time in a flower garden and using hours to observe the way the insides of the flower is designed. From what I have heard, there are literally thousands of different patterns inside of the various flowers that we have here on earth. I have also heard of a young fellow who spends hours out of his weekends to connect with the trees; he believes that his spirit guides send most of his messages through the leaves on the trees. This has become so important to him that he does not party with his friends that much anymore, his weekends are dedicated to his spiritual growth. This is very impressive for a young man to display these signs; we do not usually hear these types of things about our young men. Most of our young men are into women, bars, sports and cars; anything other than those topics will fall on deaf ears of the

common man on this planet. Be mindful and use your senses, you can look at beautiful flower beds, go to an art museum, observe and connect with the trees and you can touch objects in order to connect with their texture. Listening to the sounds of birds and everything else going on around you is also very grounding so use your five senses in these simple ways. For me, I find that I am grounded when I am working in my garden; there have been times when I planned to work for about an hour or so. I would find myself lost in time because without even realizing it, I had been out in my garden for hours and most of my day had passed me by. What I noticed was how free, calm, relaxed and fulfilled I felt after working in my garden, I have found my safe place. I feel a connection with each seed, plant and leaf that reside in my garden; there is no better place for me.

I know someone who went through an emergency who had a clinical background, so she did not need to seek medical attention or feel like she had any diseases or anything. She looked at this as a blessing because she is well aware of the thousands of empathetic individuals who end up on the wrong path. Many of these people have no knowledge of the spirit world, let alone the fact that they possess these gifts when they do find out, it can be too much to take in. The overwhelming fact that you all of a sudden have these gifts and abilities can really mess with your mind and make you wonder if you are going crazy or not. When there is no life-threatening situation that has happened, the individual may be able to go through their spiritual emergency alone without being drained by the stages. The positive side of experiencing a spiritual emergency is that it gives us so much insight and experience that we are able to help others get through their journey. If you are experiencing a spiritual emergency right now, there is nothing wrong with seeking help, just do now allow the doctor to make you believe you are having mental issues. It is all about being conscious about who you are and what you seem to be going through. When you step into their office, inform them of the spiritual journey that you are on, explain a few of the stages if you are able to; this will give them something to work with. Whatever you choose to do, please do not isolate yourself; this will

only lead to depression.

EMPATHS AND NARCISSISTS

Narcissistic Personalities

They thrive on attention and making sure that someone is worshipping them at all times. They are attracted to people that they know that they can take advantage of, use up, and neglect as much as they feel. They also realize that this type of person will always try to please them, they will be loyal, love you unconditionally, and they take full advantage of this. Individuals with a narcissistic personality disorder do not have any type of empathy, they need constant admiration, and they are extremely insecure and sensitive. They are very well aware that these individuals are emotional sponges, which means that they can absorb feelings from other people very easily and want to fulfill their every need. They will go out of their way to make this person believe that they will always be there for them, take care of them and love them; this is their way of gaining the trust of the empathy. They present a false person or a representative, as I like to call it, they are sweet, charming, and can seem very loving and attentive, this act will continue until they feel that they no longer need to put it on. Once they have them where they want them, they will begin to show their true colors, the disrespect, abuse, and neglect will all come out now because they are comfortable that the empathy is not going anywhere. Now they will begin to experience the narcissist for who they are; they will see the coldness, punishing and the constant disrespect from this person.

Spotlight On Them

The narcissist is always going to want the spotlight on them, and if the attention is placed on someone else, the narcissist is going to do something to make sure that the attention gets focused back on to them. If that does not work and other attempts fail, they are going to want to leave that situation or they will start speaking negatively about whoever is getting the attention. Most likely, they will never want to be around this group of people ever again because they were not the main focus of the event and did not get the attention that they need to survive. They must be able to control the narrative of the situation or they will become extremely uncomfortable, angry and anxious. Before they leave, they will make it known how angry they are that the other person has stolen their attention and that everyone is paying attention to someone who is not as important as they are. They will most likely accuse that other person of trying to manipulate the situation and steal all the attention even though they are the ones that actually need all of that extra attention, that is just how a narcissist does things.

As soon as they have them where they want them, they will begin to state all of their flaws; they will degrade them every chance that they get, they will also start to disrespect the way that they look as well. This is all an attempt to attack the self-esteem and confidence of that person, so they will never think they are worthy of being loved, and they will not believe there is anyone who will love them. In most cases, they will not even be thinking of themselves; they will be focused on how they can help or cure the narcissist because they believe with love, they can heal anyone. The way that they continue to string them along is by filling their head with false hope, making them believe that when they begin to act right, then they can get back their loving partner. This is another manipulation tactic, making them believe that they have done something to cause their abuse or mistreatment. By now, they have learned how to pull each string of their partner, and are well aware of how

to keep them down. Since they have that general understanding that we are all human, who makes mistakes, they are more willing to the patient and forgive, which they believe will allow for personal growth. They are vulnerable to a long-suffering because they will always believe and have faith in the fact that their partner says that they are wanting and trying to make changes within themselves. This is very important to them because their whole existence revolves around making things better, helping people evolve in life and being there to support someone when they are going through tough times. This is why the narcissist is always able to keep them around and keep them hanging on to hope because they truly believe that all humans deserve the chance to show that they have made a positive change. Even when it is apparent that they are being used and abused, they will still find a way in their heart and spirit to believe in that person, or at least feel obligated to find another way to help them. Narcissists seek out individuals who they believe that they can get the most usage out of, hey actually set their sick senses to sniff out people who are not the most confident. They already know what type of personality they need to thrive in their sickness, so they will do whatever it takes to win the affection of this person. They will treat them as if they were the most special person in the world and they will make sure to do what is necessary to make them believe their deception. Because of their need to fix or heal everyone, they will excuse abusive behavior, ignore their own needs and continue to show compassion to the narcissist. They are always looking to shower people with love, care, and compassion, which is why they are so vulnerable to the types of personalities that pursue them.

Stand Your Ground

If you are an empathetic person and you are involved with a narcissistic personality type, then you are going to need to learn to stand your ground, meet your own needs and stop making excuses for their toxic behavior. This will get you into the habit of making sure they are carrying their emotional

baggage so that you are not the one holding that weight on your shoulders. You want to make sure that you are independent within your relationship; this is for your emotional protection, your self-worth, your confidence, and your independence. You are going to have to set boundaries and limits to ensure that you are not being taken advantage of and that they are well aware of the things that you are not going to deal with. Be prepared for them to challenge you in every way possible because they have gotten used to making sure that you feel inadequate and not worthy of love. They had every intention to keep you in this state of mind so that they could continue to get what they needed and wanted from you.

Know The Games

Do not fall for those manipulation type of games, let them know that you are well aware of what they are trying to do and do not let them make you feel bad or guilty when you do not do what they want you to do. They are going to try all types of manipulation tactics to try and get you back under their control, but stand strong and resist their attempt to mess with your head. The best way to deal with a narcissist is to get as far away from them as you can, but if you choose to stay in that relationship, you need to know how to protect yourself. Do not allow them to make you feel bad for the bad decisions that they have made in their lives; this is not your weight or burden to carry. Make sure that you let them know that you are not responsible for another grown person who is capable of making their own decisions and choices.

Empaths Are Attracted To Narcissist/Opposites Attract

This is one of the worst situations for an empathetic person to be in; it is never a good connection because the two are like parallel lines, which will never connect. They are very uncomfortable with someone being in pain, have a tendency to forgive easily, which makes them a perfect target for the narcissist.

This is never a good match, because the empathetic ones are so understanding, that they tend to forgive everything the narcissist does to disrespect and abuse them. This most likely will result in the narcissist completely using, dismissing and degrading the empathy, while they continue to create more drama and chaos. Most times, they are drawn or attracted to one another for all of the wrong reasons, so the relationship usually never has a chance to become a healthy one. This is usually a toxic situation, which always ends up in a disaster.

Beautiful Beginning

It does not take long for that beauty to go away and the ugly reality sets in. The narcissist will do everything in their heart to show they are loving, caring and sincere. They make the sparks fly so high in the beginning and things are so electrifying that it just sweeps the other person off of their feet. They always start as the sweetest, most romantic and understanding people that you have ever met, but they cannot hide the monster for too long. They are falling in love, full of bliss, then the reality of who they are in the relationship begins to show up and take over the situation. The narcissist has made a habit of making sure that they feel miserable, dependent on them and guilty for questioning them in any way at all. The next thing you know, months have passed, and the empathetic person is in a toxic situation that they see no way get out of. Now they have lost their light and their empathic abilities because they have fallen into a world of negativity, abuse, and neglect.

Dangerous Bond

That whole hamster in a wheel type of existence will have an empathetic person trapped and feeling like there is nowhere else to go, which enables this trauma bond between the victim and the abuser. Now, they are at a point where they feel like it is not possible to get away, or they may feel guilty because they still feel the need to fix or help that person, so they continue to stay

in the relationship. When you have empathetic abilities, this will automatically allow you to take a look at yourself, your shortcomings and flaws, which can be taken advantage of when bonding with the wrong type of individual. Many times, they will fall into abusive or toxic relationships, usually with a narcissist, because they always have the belief that they can save that person. This usually does not end up good for them, because they get caught up in a dangerous cycle of abuse, trauma, and toxicity, from trying to fix their abuser.

The Need To Fix Or Heal

In many ways, they will begin to look at themselves as the problem and wonder what is wrong with them, all because they have not been able to help that toxic person in their life. This is when that dangerous bond, also known as the trauma bond, because now they are trying to see what needs to be changed within themselves, instead of the other person. Even when they are well aware that they are in a toxic or abusive relationship, they are focused on the feelings that they have for the abuser, the help that the abuser needs, and how much everyone has abandoned the abuser. They have now forgotten all about their own needs, their self-worth, and there is not any self-esteem present while they are allowing themselves to be used and abused by some loser. Many times, they have allowed their boundaries and limits to be not only crossed but crushed, which allows the narcissist room to thrive and grow because they have smelled a weakness. They are so loyal that because of this dangerous bond, they are allowing all kinds of disrespect, abuse, dismissal, and neglect to go on in their lives, all because they feel obligated to be there for someone who is abusing them. It will usually take them a while to realize that their partner has taken advantage of the fact that they are extremely understanding, emotionally available, vulnerable and very forgiving.

odependent

These individuals easily feel guilty, ashamed, or fearful for things they did not even do; this is a very common thing that they go through. Surviving sexual abuse or any sort of emotional manipulation or trauma growing up, these feelings will double and they can be easily be convinced that they are doing something wrong simply because of that ability to feel the reality so deeply. The co-dependent trait is very real; they do not allow themselves to feel because they will always feel as if they are wrong even when they are not, which makes them a target for manipulative personality types. Those who prey upon the weak, they sniff out people-pleasing individuals who will allow themselves to be controlled and taken advantage of. Even when they feel that they do not deserve what they are going through, their mind will tell them that they have done something to earn that treatment.

GET OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Come Into Your Power

There is no longer a need for you to continue running away, to keep hiding, and isolating yourself because you would much rather avoid negative environments or people. Even though running and hiding makes you feel safe, you have to leave that comfort zone so that you can become emotionally mature and grow. You cannot allow that fear to imprison your power; it is time to take a deep breath, find that three seconds of courage, and keep it moving. This is the time for you to realize that when you come into contact with negative energy or situation, you have the power to influence things and change that energy immediately.

Embrace Change

You should be in the habit of embracing any positive changes in your life, finding the courage every day to challenge yourself and be ready to take on something new. You must remain committed to the idea of change and starting a new life so that you will now be able to bring clarity to the choices that you make. Just like any new journey, it is important to know what you need for you to have peace and safety. Showing the courage for change, celebrate the process because it may take a lot of hard work and plenty of time to see positive changes in your life. The process of change can be a very long road, so take the time to

celebrate each step that you were able to accomplish.

Thirty Days Without Routines

This is a great way to challenge yourself and prepare yourself for a new life of adventure, new things, and getting rid of your daily routines. It is time for you to get up and try new things, and you will not be able to do so if you have your mind programmed to do the same thing every day. You will be the first one to come up with a reason that you cannot do or try something because you are so locked into the idea of what you are used to doing every day. Go out and buy yourself a calendar, even if you already have one, this is specifically for this exercise, so that you will have a visual aid during this new monthly journey. When you get up on that first day, do not do what you normally do, if the first thing you do is get coffee, then change that up and do something completely different. The second day, you should go and participate in an activity that you have never done before, try a dance or yoga class at your neighborhood recreation center or community center. By the third day, your mind is already ready to do something different, because you have begun to break that cycle and insert new ideas and thoughts into your mind. It will be much easier from here on out because now you are curious about how this is going to affect you and how you live your life, so you are anxious to get up each day so that you can try something new. At this stage, you are now spending your days thinking of things that you can try. You are revisiting old conversations that you have had in the past, where you rejected ideas and suggestions. You are online, on the phone, and using the new people that have come into your life, to gain access to new things that you can try or dare yourself to do. This has become exciting for you as well, one of the best things about getting out of your comfort zone, starting new habits and going against your normal routine, is the feeling of independence that you get inside. After the first week, you should be close to an expert at getting yourself up and out of those old ways, routines and habits. It can be a very exciting time because while you are going against your routines, your spirit

will begin to open up even more so that you will be able to become the person that you were meant to be. Once you do this exercise for thirty days, you are not going to go back to whatever it was that you were doing, because now you have created a whole new life for yourself, which include, new habits, new routines and constantly challenging yourself.

Curiosity About Strangers

Most of the highly empathic people are naturally curious about everyone, especially strangers. They usually have no problem talking to the person sitting next to them on the bus, which some people will not do. All of us were born naturally inquisitive, but as we grow older and go through life experiences, that goes away along with the rest of our innocence. When it comes to strangers, making it a habit not to examine, just inquire and be very curious, this will expand your empathy when you communicate with people outside of your usual social circle, interacting and encountering individuals with different worldviews from your own. Curiosity is very good for us; it is a key character strength that will enhance the amount of satisfaction you get out of your life while being useful to combat the extreme loneliness that many people are struggling with when cultivating curiosity, you need to do more than just have a general chat about the news, your mission is always to try and understand how the mind of the other person works. You will meet strangers every day, so find a way to have a conversation with as many of them as you can, this will only build up your courage as well as your social skills.

Expand Your Knowledge

Make sure that you read everything that you can; you should start with something that you have been interested in or curious about for a while. Go to the library and check out a book on that subject; this will get you into the habit of reading for research. Then you can move on to reading for entertainment.

Once again, it is a good idea, to begin with, something that you want to learn more about, this way you will not have to consistently motivate yourself to read if it is something that you like. Take the time to be still; you can meditate, chant or tap into mindfulness; this is a great way to focus on your spirituality and ensure a peaceful life. As you go further in your spiritual journey, you will begin to feel that the universe is constantly sending you messages and clues that keep you on your true path. You will start to experience more and more coincidences or undeniable signs that are meant to guide you to the deepest point of your spiritual connection. You might have maybe something as simple as having four different people tell you about the same movie, or you will connect with a kindred spirit randomly. You can always ask the universe for assistance or call on the angels for help when you need them; they are always ready to help. Asking for a sign or requesting help is a great way to speed up your awakening process and get through your training quicker.

PRACTICAL TIPS TO EMPATHIZE WITH ANYONE

Active Listening

Empathetic individuals do not need to practice this, because this is something else that just comes naturally for them to do; it is as if they were designed to listen to other people. These personality types listen so well that they will often remember facts and information told to them when the person who told them does not even remember. They are well aware of how to be an active participant in a conversation with someone, which involves responding, constant eye contact and asking questions. For those of you who are working on your skills, and training yourself to become more empathetic, just keep in mind, you are going to have to learn how to truly open up. Understanding, compassion and the effort to show them that you are truly present and hearing everything that is being said to you will give them the feeling that you care about what they are saying.

Learn to Master Your Emotions

The most important part of processing difficult emotions is to stop trying to control them, but recognize it and allow yourself to go through the emotion. You can figure out a way to manage the way that you respond to certain situations and people. You are also going to need to learn how to manage your stress so that you can deal with changes and anxiety a little better. When you can

remain calm in a difficult environment or situation, this shows that you are mature in your empathic abilities, and you are only getting stronger.

Worth

You value your own emotions and what they tell you, which enables you to become more confident, and you begin to shine within your true empathetic abilities. The more that you demand an equal level of respect in all the relationships you choose to invest in, the more that you will receive, and if you do not get what you deserve, then you may have to walk away from them so that you can allow room for the more healthier ones to come into your life. In this way, these special individuals are excellent teachers of true reciprocity, so most of the time, if you are not doing your part, or holding up your end of the deal, then they will not stay around for you to continue this behavior.

Challenge Wrongs and Injustice

We all have seen or heard things about someone being mistreated, hurt or neglected, but there are only certain individuals who will feel in their spirit that they need to try and do something to make things better. Living in your truth, you will constantly find yourself on a mission to go out and fix things, speak for those who are silenced and find justice for those who are less fortunate.

Put Yourself In Their Shoes

It is so easy to say what you would or would not do in certain situations, but until you find yourself faced with specific difficulties, you will not know what someone is going through. Most people have a difficult time showing empathy for others because they do not bother to take the time to think

of how they would feel if it were happening to them. For a truly spiritual person, this will be something that is not hard to do, because they will be able to feel some of the emotions of that person, imagining themselves in that person's shoes, is never an issue for them. Many times, people will believe that they can do something better than someone else; this is when you should try experimental empathy, which can enhance their skills and understanding by getting the experience of what the other person has to go through. Try it out before you go and criticize someone else, you may find that it is not as easy as you thought it was, which should make you respect that other person whom you decided to put down. If you are in training or enhancing your skills, another example of this idea would be to truly imagine that you are going through what they are going through.

Active Listening

Most people are so caught up in their world or so busy thinking about what they want to say that they are not able to effectively listen to others. These are the type of individuals that will cut you off while you are in mid-sentence; they will dismiss the statements that you make, to focus on their own. These are the people who always end up asking the same questions over and over because they never actually listen to the person that they are talking to. The key is to make sure that you are present and participating in the conversation that you are having; this makes a huge difference to the person that you are speaking with.

Positivity

Recognizing that you have the power within you to change things by thinking positive, this is a great way to get your mind and body ready for the journey of healing. Having true faith means that you believe that the work that you are doing will produce positive outcomes for your future. When you continue to eat right, meditate, practice self-care, you will inspire others with

that special gift that you have.

Gifts

Some people like to compare it to having magical powers, basically being able to read an entire room as soon as you walk into it. Many of these people have talked about having this same kind of ability, even being able to read the temperature. It is when you get a sudden feeling that there is someone has been triggered, assaulted, feeling angry, or even experiencing overwhelming joy. Being able to feel what is getting ready to happen, based on being able to draw the emotions of everyone in the room, this can be difficult or even frightening to deal with. When you are still unskilled and unhealed in your gift, often being so naïve can make us feel like we are always at the mercy of what everyone else is feeling and thinking. Many times we do not even have a sense of what we think or how we are feeling, because we are always so tuned into the emotions of others. The better that we get at tuning into how we feel, listening to the message of whatever our emotions are, and responding accordingly, the more we can avoid things and move forward. We have to be able to focus on moving towards what we need to do to accomplish our goals.

Resistance

When you are feeling resistance you do not necessarily have to understand why you are feeling it, you do not need to know all the details, and there is no need to try and analyze it, just feel. You want to get to a place where you do not feel that anymore, at that moment, try moving towards a place where you do not resist as much. Make a habit of giving yourself whatever you need, no matter what, this includes having to say no on a more consistent basis. You always have the option to speak the truth to someone with love, so do not hesitate to let them know how you are feeling or how they can improve.

It is important to be mindful and aware of this ability; you can sense or feel things is very strong and direct so it affords us the ability to be prepared for certain things. The better you get it taking care of the gift, the stronger and more interesting it will become. You want to get to the point where you know how to process those internal warnings when you receive them so that you will not resist or shy away from them. Many people do not ever get to this point because they never value themselves enough to care enough about how they feel. There are plenty of individuals who have never managed to come into their power or learn how to take care of themselves, so they end up resenting their gift. They go through life feeling like they are constantly held prisoner by the feelings of everyone else.

Listen to how you feel, say no when you do not want to do something, and say yes to the things that you want to do. If you have this gift and you are not in touch with your own needs, you may find yourself stuck in a codependent state of mind in your relationships. When you are aware of your gift and leverage it, you can use it very intentionally and make it work to your advantage. This is why you want to take the time to develop this gift so that you can heal yourself, come into your full power and begin to help others.

World Healing

There is so much pain on this planet that has never been addressed or healed and there have been wars going on for centuries claiming so many lives. Those energies have been consumed by the millions of empathetic individuals walking the earth, and they have been ambushed and abused by that horrible energy. Since most of them are not aware of unskilled, they have no idea how to begin the process of disconnecting themselves from those negative feelings. These people are a vital part of the healing process and their ability to

feel emotions from other people can be leveraged if you look at it objectively. The greatest need on the planet is for restoration and for people and their trauma to be healed. Many humans need to be restored so that we are tuned into our natural navigation system where the mind is no longer the master, but the heart is. Your mind is a wonderful servant and a terrible master, it is one of your tools, but it is not meant to run things, which is for your heart to do. When your mind is in charge, you tend to go on autopilot which instantly causes automatic programming to take over.

Quick Release

One way you can release a negative emotion while at work is to take a break, go to the restroom and cry, then go back to your desk. If you are new at quick releases, you will learn quickly just how helpful it is to allow yourself to feel the emotion, go through it and then let it go. Allowing yourself to go through the emotion instead of ignoring it and keeping it locked inside, frees up your spirit, and the healing can slowly begin. Thousands of these special individuals tend to get very sick and this is why you see such a huge correlation between them and autoimmune disorders. They are not waking in their truth and their system starts breaking down because there is a program in their mind telling them that it is wrong to feel. It will make them believe that they are weak for feeling certain emotions, so they will begin to make those messages their reality.

Meet Your Own Needs

When you make it a priority to meet your needs consistently, it will ensure that you are aware strong enough to disconnect from those negative energies that you will come into contact with. Please take care of yourself, take the time to do the things that you love to do, spend more time on your hobbies. It is time to put yourself first; it will be a challenge because you are so used to

taking care of others. Self-care is so important; you have to be in good condition to be of assistance to those who you were sent to serve.

Listen To The Spirit

Pay close attention to leaders and public people as they speak people; they are constantly channeling all the time and not realizing it. Many of them will talk about the problems and solutions of the world, who is to blame, who is at fault, and the possibilities of war. If you listen closely to their spirits, the intentions behind what they are saying come across very clearly as self-hating spirits with no love for humanity at all.

Voice For The Silenced

Many individuals in this dominant society are not able to express the way that they feel. They are silenced which is one of the most dangerous things that can happen to anyone. This is one of the main reasons that you exist on this earth as an empathetic person. You are so valuable at this time because you can feel people who are silenced. You can feel what is going on, what people think and feel regardless if they admit to it or not. This gift makes you incredibly special to the planet because you can spot where the real danger is when everyone cannot or they choose to ignore it.

Mental Disturbances

Increased brain activity, thinking at unusually high levels, racing thoughts that make no sense at all, paranoia, feeling the world is not safe, your brain starts to create stories about what is going on with you, and this is exhausting, you are growing and changing so quickly, your mind and brain is going through changes. The more you learn to work with these shifts in your

mind, the easier it will become. Collective consciousness, as soon as you become more sensitive, your mind will tap into this consciousness, which can be hateful thoughts, fearful thoughts, and this can scare you because this is not normal. Many people feel as if they are losing their minds because of this happening. Being mindful of these occurrences will help to calm your mind and remove on from the thought.

Increased Anxiety

Very common as the spiritual awakening moves forward and you experience the process of growth, your nervous system is jarred because this system is the mediator between the spirit world and the physical world, very sensitive during awakening. System going into overdrive trying to keep up with all of the changes going on.

Personality Change

You are going through so many serious changes quickly, so your psyche starts to melt, the ego is going away, and your old personality traits will suddenly go away; your entire personality may change. You may begin to dress differently, eat different food, like or interest in different things, it can scare you because you may think something is wrong with you. Especially when friends or family start to pressure about the way you have changed and how they do not know you anymore.

Life Purpose

Remember who you are and what you are doing not influenced by anything, you are strong, and commit to following the path as your soul reveals it to you Walking path of mission one step at a time, with confidence, you may

not know the details of your mission, we do not find that out until the end of our lives, but you can be aware of small parts, this takes you into the rest of your life

Work With Your Heart

it keeps opening up the more stages you go through, learn to work with wisdom, work with intuition, listen to heart, come from the mind down into the heart, which is the central chakra, the great healer and the seed of the soul, transmits energy to help you heal connecting with heart connects you closer to your soul. Then you are only taking steps that are guided by your heart, and you will feel this; the more you listen, the more it will guide you. Surrender or it causes more suffering

Quiet Time

You do not have to meditate, but you have to figure out a way to quiet your mind. You have to practice this every day so that you differentiate between heart and mind

Sympathy

Do not confuse this word with empathy, sympathy is when you show concern for what someone may be going through, but it has nothing with actually feeling emotions. Most of the time, when someone claims to sympathize with another person, they are displaying signs that they pity them instead of caring how they are feeling.

ift Of Reading

People do not always convey all the details. They may withhold information out

of fear, distrust, or some other inhibiting factor, be it internal or based on those with whom they are engaging. Additionally, they may express themselves in ways not extremely articulate, thus requiring the listener to make sense of what is not being said or what is being hinted at, beneath the external expressions and words. As designers, we need to develop intuition, imagination, emotional sensitivity, and creativity in or to dig deeper without prying too personally, to extract the right kinds of insight to make a more meaningful difference.

You will quit your job while you are going through this stage because you have entered a space in your life where you cannot participate in things that you do not like or things that do not fulfill you. If something is not in harmony with your purpose in life, even if it is something that you have been working on for years, you will feel empty, so you will have no problem letting it go.

It Was All Fake

You have begun to feel as if everything about your life is fake and feels like some sort of deception. Everything that you were taught to believe in, the values you were raised with, and the things you were told about the world were lies. Now that you have seen the true reality of life, you feel as if you have no idea who you are anymore. There is a whole new set of questions that are in your head now, which include the integrity and honesty of your parents. It may seem so difficult that you feel you will not make it through it, but you will begin a healing journey of self-awareness very soon.

yes Wide Open

You can see through any deception, trick, scheme, or lie that society or anyone

else tries to place in front of you. It does not even have to be in your presence for you to be able to tell if it is genuine or not; this is how strong you sense things now.

Need Deep Conversations

During most conversations, many of these individuals will instantly separate themselves mentally without even trying to do so. The average person in the world is not interested in having serious conversations discussing spirit guides, emotions, and what is going on in the world. Talking about meaningless things is truly disturbing to your soul, and you have no problem eventually showing that. You will always try to direct the discussion towards something more relevant or serious, but this is when you lose the interest of the person you are talking with. If you find yourself in an environment where there is no constructive conversation, you will most likely find a way to isolate yourself from the situation whenever you can.

You Pull Out The Scissors

Your awakening has forced you to make an instant decision to cut those negative habits out and insert new more positive ones into your life. You have a strong desire to correct certain behaviors and make the necessary changes so you can begin your new journey of self-discovery. You are drained from all of the negative energy in the world, and you suddenly feel the need to start cutting people out of your life.

You Appreciate More

The smallest things will begin to make you happy; you may wake up looking forward to hearing the birds sing or hearing an infant laugh

hard for the very first time. You notice all of the beauty in life and view w look at the world as this amazing place where you can thrive, learn, grow, and love others with all of your might.

You Love Harder

As your ego is shattered into thousands of pieces, the way that you love others will change tremendously. You will now to love other people intensely, and your feelings still get hurt when the love is not returned on the same level as you gave it out.

Connect With Your Spiritual Side

The first thing you need to do is to make it known that you have a deep desire to connect with your spirit so that you can follow as it guides you through life. Second, you need to figure out what steps you need to take to accomplish this goal and get to work. This is something that you will continue for the rest of your life; you will consistently count on your spirit for everything that you need in life.

For an empathetic person to survive and thrive in this world, they need to take advantage of the possible distractions that nature offers to us. This is essential for them to maintain their spirit and energy level and keep their ego in check. The fact that empathetic personalities consistently take on the energy of other people is a real challenge for these sensitive individuals. They are always in research mode and remain prepared to alter negative energies if they need to. Even after you have managed to master this, you still need to be careful not to allow things to interfere with the natural flow of your life.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Workbook for Adults

KATHRIN DESHOTELS

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on purchasing *Anger Management: Workbook for Adults,* and thank you for doing so.

The following chapters will discuss how to deal with anger in the best way possible. Anger management is not something that is needed by only a handful of people. It is necessary for everyone because you have to deal with anger on a daily basis. Yes, it is true that some people tend to get angrier than others, but learning how to cope with anger issues is a lesson everyone needs to have.

I wrote this book to provide you all with a practical guide that will help you follow a step-by-step approach to curb your anger issues. Gradually, you will develop your own motivation to change, and you will also learn several techniques that will help you in turning down the heat. If you want to lead a more fulfilling and happier life, then anger management is one of the first steps towards it. Having anger issues is not something to be afraid of or ashamed about because it is completely normal. But what you have to learn is keeping your anger under control, and for that, this book can be your perfect guide.

The moment you have a better understanding of your anger, and why it happens, you will learn how to talk back to it and handle your frustration.

There are plenty of books on this subject on the market, thanks again for

choosing this one! Every effort was made to ensure it is full of as much useful information as possible; please enjoy!

WHAT IS ANGER?

ANGER CANNOT BE DESCRIBED in words, and it can be quite difficult to understand as well. But its consequences can be quite nasty, leading to frustration and pain. The effects are quite toxic and linger for some time. They can affect every area of your life. Anger, when left uncontrolled, can lead to health issues and even increase the chances of a heart attack. Anger can be quite confusing too because if you think about it carefully, you will find yourself being both happy and sad after you were angry with someone.

For example, sometimes it might seem right for you to be angry, and you have plenty of reasons to justify your anger. But if you think carefully and be honest with yourself, then you will also find situations when your anger was unnecessarily strong, and it created several problems. It might even seem foolish to you when you think about how angry you were at a petty matter. If you recall, then you would probably find several incidents where your uncontrolled anger led to regrets, headaches, arguments and so on.

But on the other hand, anger is also considered to be one of the basic feelings that human beings have. Anger can be seen everywhere – in relationships, at workplaces, and also among families. Your entire existence on this earth is somehow entwined with the feeling of anger. But there are also

certain aspects of anger that have a good side. Anger can be used as a sign to show your partner that your relationship is not going right.

Sometimes, proper use of anger can also lead to people taking you more seriously and listening to you with more concentration. Anger can also help you combat avoidance and face challenges or situations that you had been pushing aside for long. But the loss and suffering that comes with anger clouds all other benefits that it might have. When you are angry, you make mistakes and wrong decisions. You do not think before speaking, and as a result of this, you end up hurting your loved ones. So, anger needs to be managed and kept under control.

So, to answer your question of ‘what is anger,’ I can simply say that it is an emotional response. There are different thoughts and feelings associated with it, but it is nonetheless an internal awareness. Anger developed in human beings as a part of their survival skills because sometimes anger is what we use to demonstrate wrongdoing. Anger can be mild or strong. Mild anger can be a result of a lot of things like stress, tiredness, sleep deprivation and so on and even when your basic needs are not met. Sometimes, anger may not be your primary emotion but a secondary one to fear, sadness or feeling threatened.

But you must remember that anger is not simply a state of mind, but much more than that as prolonged exposure to anger can have physical consequences of your health.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF ANGER

SOMETIMES, people tend to jump directly into their ‘attack mode’ when they are confronted with complications or difficult situations. This often happens against their own better judgment. But in most cases, that same person will be regretting what he/she just said. So, why do you think your brain reacts in a way that it knows will be regretful later on? What might seem a single episode of outburst has a whole lot of process going on in the back end, and once you understand that, you will have complete knowledge about the physiology of anger.

Your brain has a structure known as the amygdala, and it is comprised of two structures in the shape of almonds. This is the primary place where your emotions begin. This is also the region of the brain that is present as your line of defense to any threat that comes your way. The amygdala is responsible for sending alarms the moment it senses any threat. When your body receives these alarms, it takes the steps necessary to protect yourself from the approaching threat.

Now, there is another part of your brain, which is called the cortex, and it is responsible for all the judgments you make and thoughts that have you have. The efficiency of the amygdala is so high that even before the cortex starts functioning on a particular issue, the amygdala warns your brain about the threats involved. In short, your brain has been constructed and wired in such a way that it starts taking action way before the consequences have been analyzed or measured. But by giving you all this information, I definitely do not endorse

bad behavior putting this as an excuse. Bad behavior can always be curbed with strong willpower to change and controlling all your aggressive impulses. Yes, it won't happen in a day, and you will need a lot of practice but it is not impossible.

So, by now, you must have understood that controlling anger is more like a skill, and it does not happen instinctively. No one is born with it. When you become angry, you will notice that your muscles start tensing up. There is a reason for this as well. Have you heard about catecholamines? They are a particular group of chemical neurotransmitters that are present inside your brain and they are released when you are angry. That is why you feel that there has been a burst of energy inside you and this feeling can last for about a few minutes. This energy is also the reason why angry people feel the need to react immediately and take some action that is protective in nature.

You will also notice how quickly your heart rate increases in such situations and consequently leads to a rise in your blood pressure levels too. Your breathing pace also becomes fast, and sometimes, your face might even seem flushed. This is because when you are angry, your body prepares itself for any kind of physical activity and, in the process, sends an increased amount of blood flow to the limbs. Gradually, you will notice that all your concentration is on the point of your anger, and everything else seems a blur. Subsequently, several other hormones and brain neurotransmitters are released which prolong the state of arousal and two of the common hormones include noradrenaline and adrenaline.

There is a region in your brain called the prefrontal complex, and it is responsible for keeping your emotions in check. The region is located behind your forehead. You have already learned how your emotions are controlled by the amygdala, and now, you should also know that all your judgments are controlled by the prefrontal cortex. Your emotions can even be switched off by the left prefrontal cortex. Thus, this is how it can keep everything in control. Thus, when you master anger management strategies, you will be helping your prefrontal cortex gain the upper hand over the amygdala so that your emotions

don’t get in the way of your judgments. In this book, you will learn different ways in which you can control your anger.

Anger basically has two phases. In the first phase, your body prepares all the resources it needs to prepare for a fight, which is somewhat like the first response whenever someone is angry. But then comes the wind down phase. That is when your body starts returning back to the resting phase. You no longer treat the object of your anger as a threat or at least an immediate threat. But the process of relaxation from a state of anger is not easy and needs practice. Also, when the arousal of anger is caused due to adrenaline, that state can last a very long time, and it also has another bad effect; that is, it lowers the threshold so the next time, you become angry even more quickly.

This same feeling of arousal during anger has other effects on your body as well. One of the most common effects is that it makes it difficult for a person to remember all the details. When levels of arousal are high, you actually cannot concentrate anything and thus, later on, fail to recall what actually happened.

As you already learned, the amygdala causes a release of stress hormones whenever you are angry. One such stress hormone is cortisol. When the levels of cortisol become high, a greater amount of calcium is absorbed by the neurons, which ultimately leads them to fire frequently causing death. The prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus of the brain are the two main regions that are affected by the negative effects of cortisol. Also, when the levels of cortisol go beyond a certain level, there is a decrease in the amount of serotonin. Serotonin is the hormone that keeps you happy. So, with a decrease in serotonin, you start feeling sad, frustrated and even angrier. The aggressive behavior sees a sudden spike and you might even face depression.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ANGER

WHEN WE START TALKING about anger, there are so many questions that pop up in people's minds, and in this book, we will talk about everything in detail. But first, in this chapter, you will get the answers to some of the most common questions about anger that people generally have.

One of the prime questions that everyone has is 'what is anger,' but if you have read Chapter 1, then you'll know that we have discussed that topic at length there.

What is the Difference Between Healthy and Unhealthy Anger?

Everyone experiences anger in their life, but you should know that at most times, anger can be quite a valuable and constructive emotion. Do you know why? It is because when you are angry, you become aware of the fact that something is upsetting you or bothering you. It is because of anger that you start becoming adaptive to your surroundings as your body is promoted to take some action. But anger can be problematic too, especially when it becomes too intense. Anger can sometimes be in the form of an annoyance that is momentary but at other times, it can take the form of uncontrollable rage.

rustration is one of the basic feelings that hide behind anger, and this frustration

can be due to a variety of reasons. You can be frustrated because you are not getting what you deserve or what you want. When the needs are truly legitimate, in that case, the frustration is healthy because your anger shows that you need to be treated respectfully. But anger can also arise out of depression or from needs that are narcissistic.

But most people are confused about how they can differentiate between healthy and unhealthy anger. The process is quite easy. When you are angry and acting aggressively and simultaneously in constant denial of your own feelings, then that anger is unhealthy. It will bring you down, and slowly, the anger will gnaw away at any positive vibe that you have left. You even start disrespecting others without any reason at all.

Although, in the case of healthy anger, you will be able to acknowledge the fact that you are angry, and you will also find healthier and reasonable ways to express your anger without hurting anyone else. You also try your best to act in a constructive way and figure out strategies in which you can deal with your anger. Also, if your anger is healthy then after a certain point of time, you will know how to let it go instead of clinging to it. No matter how much you are angry with the other person, you never treat them with disrespect.

Are There Different Types of Anger?

There are definitely two types of anger if you consider from the primary point of view, and you already have learned about those two types. One is the constructive form of anger and the other is the destructive form. But the latter one can be further divided into five types or you can also call them five faces of destructive anger.

- The first face is that of passive aggression. This is when the person knowingly takes actions that will disturb the other person or put them out of ease.
- The second face is that of sarcasm. This is when the person deliberately makes cutting remarks about the other person that openly conveys disgust, and the tone is taunting.
- The third one is that of cold anger, where the person gives the other person a silent treatment. They go into a period of withdrawal, and then even when the other person inquires what is wrong, they do not reveal the actual reason.
- Then comes hostility. Here, the person will show several signs of annoyance and frustration openly. They will speak with increased intensity and often have a raised voice while talking.
- Lastly, the person shows aggression. This is where episodes of name-calling, cursing, and blame games come into play. The person might even act out and hit others or throw things in order to vent.

Is Anger Harmful to Your Health?

This is another of the very common questions that people ask when it comes to anger. It is true that when managed carefully anger can give you some benefits and also act as a driving force in your life so that you can make the necessary changes.

As already mentioned before, the ‘fight or flight’ response of the body is one of the prime effects that anger has on the human body. It also triggers several other emotions like anxiety, excitement, and fear. Your body literally overflows with the stress hormones that are released by the adrenal glands. All the blood that is going towards your gut is shunned and is redirected by your brain towards the muscles in your body. Alternatively, your mind goes into a more focused state whereby the levels of concentration are at its peak. But

with this uncontrolled and wild flow of stress hormones throughout your body comes some grave consequences to the other organ systems. Almost all the vital systems are affected, including the cardiovascular system and the central nervous system.

Thus, risks of diseases such as gastric ulcers, strokes, heart attacks, hypertension, and panic attacks increase by ten folds.

What are Some of the Common Myths About Anger?

Not everything that you hear about anger is true. Some of them are myths, and that is why it is important to know these myths so that you can identify the truth for yourself.

- The first myth that we are going to talk about is *anger is one of the forms of negative emotion*. This is entirely false. Being angry with someone or something is completely normal, and it happens with everyone. There are a lot of positive effects of anger as well. If you look at the past, then you will see how the various social injustices have been dealt with just because people were not happy and angry with them.
- Secondly, *anger and aggression are the same*. This is a big no. It is true that showing aggressive behavior is one of the signs that you are immensely angry, but it does not necessarily make the two entities the same. The moment you consider these two the same is when you lose control over anger and start venting it all out in aggressive ways.
- The next myth is very common, and it says *anger management is not effective*. This is something you will learn to break because by the end of the book, you will have learned all the strategies, and once you start applying them in your life, you will know how effective anger

management is.

- *Venting out your anger is necessary***.** Venting your anger out is not the only way to deal with it. In fact, it is the wrong way. You should try alternative and healthier ways to deal with your anger instead of just venting it out at other people.
- *Ignoring your anger is the best way to let it go*. Absolutely not! The more you ignore your feelings, you are not letting them go. Instead, you are bottling them up. The moment your emotional bottle is full is when you will burst out and have a complete breakdown. Also, research has proven that venting your anger only increases your guilt later on.

How Will I Know that I Need Anger Management?

This question is also very common because everyone gets angry in their daily life, but when is your anger truly qualified for starting anger management techniques? The truth is that anger management is not limited to people who have great issues. Everyone can start practicing anger management, and they are going to benefit from it. While we grow up, we are taught a lot of things but unfortunately, anger management is not one of them. You do not necessarily have to be an aggressive person or a very rude or violent person to start anger management.

Anger management not only teaches you to manage your anger, but it also teaches you how you can communicate better and not avoid your problems. You will learn to face every barrier that comes your way so that you do not bottle up regrets or guilts. You will also learn to steer clear of negativity and prevent sabotaging the happiness of others. If you are someone who has been getting angry over the pettiest matters, playing tit for tat at every turn in life, being easily irritated and impatient, or being revengeful with everyone, then you are definitely in need of some anger management strategies. But you should also opt for anger management if you are displaying over-defensive behavior

that has led you to drive your loved ones away.

Are Some People More Prone to Getting Angry than Others?

Whether someone is more prone to anger than others depends on a lot of factors like physiological reactions, thoughts, and physical activity. For example, some people have the habit of responding quickly to stimuli that is aversive, and they are the ones that easily get aroused. So, matters like annoying noises, bad smells, or even heat can make them angry. But on the other hand, those who are not of this type don't usually bother about such stimuli and also react very slowly. A big role is played by genetic variability in these cases.

But habits of copying others and forces of reinforcement are the two things that play a big part when it comes to expressing anger physically in the form of banging the desk, sulking, and so on. There also has been research on different types of media that lead to violent behavior, for example, movies, video games, or even listening to music that has a touch of violence in it. When people play violent video games, their brain gets wired to be hyper-alert at all times, and they have this inherent nature to kill opponents. So, in the gaming environment, they get upgraded to the next level whenever they kill their enemies, and this somehow impacts their real life too.

Is There a Difference Between Dealing With Anger Among Strangers and Family Members?

Transient interactions are the most common reason behind the anger that emerges for strangers. But in the case of family members, the interactions are ongoing. So, when you are angry with a stranger, you have to remind yourself that you might not meet that person ever again. For example, you might be angry with the cab driver for being late a few minutes. That might be an unpleasant event, but it is not any catastrophe. Also, you do not have to return to the cab driver again and trigger that anger.

But when you are angry with a family member, and you see that person things can get really difficult. That is when you need strategies to help you cope with the situation. You need to practice relaxation. All these strategies are spoken at length in the latter part of this book. You need to get rid of all negativity and also eliminate the habit of broad generalization.

So, these were the frequently asked questions about anger. Anger management truly works in helping people bringing their anger under control. Anger is present to some degree with everyone. When it is mild, it might not be that big of a problem to you, and it can even dissipate in a while. But when anger becomes intense, that is when people resort to physical and verbal abuses or start holding grudges too seriously. If you are in such a state, then you should not delay and get started with anger management.

It is okay to practice displaying your anger in an assertive way as long as you are not demeaning anyone. There should be an appropriate tone. Anger management will teach you what strategies will be effective for you and in what situation.

HOW CAN ANGER AFFECT YOUR LIFE?

NOT EVERYONE SEES how gravely anger affects your life, but it does. If you are frustrated about something, you often tend to hurt your loved ones or spoil your relationship with someone else. That is what happens when you keep suppressing and stuffing your feelings in a bottle. People who have the habit of suppressing their anger cannot be identified from the outside. But on the inside, their feelings always seem to be neglected, and they are just on the brim of exploding.

These people often take the help of indirect comments to cloud their anger, but disguised in those comments is humor with an edge. This is how anger keeps leaking no matter how much you try to suppress it. Hurtful or sarcastic comments might make you feel relaxed for a moment, but they actually end up affecting your social relationships.

Impact on Communication

The detrimental effects of anger on communication are many, but the first way in which it affects you is that you lose your logical thinking. Your brain has a method of processing information, but when you are angry, that entire process is hampered. The problems that you used to solve in a minute in the past might seem difficult to solve now. Also, angry people become more prone to rejecting any kind of help or explanation that is provided by others. So, even if someone is

trying to help you in the right way with useful information, you might end up rejecting that help just because you are angry.

Also, when you are angry, you receive strong reactions from people that are present around you. When you project your hurtful words at others in front of you, they are either scared, defensive, or emotionally hurt. No matter what reaction you have caused them, one thing is for sure, that is, the conversation will not end well or as productive as you thought it would be.

As already explained, when someone is angry, a response of fight or flight or freeze is triggered in them. That is why they fail to understand or hear what others are saying, or they fail to interpret things accurately. The reason behind the escalation of most arguments (that arise out of anger) is because the person misunderstands the words that are being said. The person in front of you might have meant something good, but in your state of anger, you will twist those words in your mind to bring up some wrong meaning.

When you have passive anger, as the name suggests, it does not express itself actively but always manages to find an outlet that will let the anger leak out. The anger will leak in ways which you can never think of. For example, you might say yes in a conversation where you actually meant no, or you might be pretending that you are completely fine, but in reality, you are not. It is a myth that when anger is left suppressed or avoided, it fades away. Instead, it leads to even more potential problems. This is even more common in people who have the habit of avoiding conflicts or confrontations. But they actually keep piling the resentments which burst one day. Ultimately, you become so burdened with the stress that you cannot concentrate on other important things in life.

Impact on Emotions

At times, anger can really help you with hard emotions. For example, if you are going through a phase of depression or maybe lagging at work due to procrastination, anger can actually help you out when expressed and used in a controlled manner. If you are angry and end up saying some hurtful words to others, it might give you a momentary relief to release that bottled up frustration, but after some time, all of those bad words will come back at you, and you will feel bad for what you have just said.

Being angry is definitely a part of life, but when you don't have control over your anger, you end up hurting both others and yourself. You might have used anger in the past to intimidate others and state your position, and that might even have worked for you once or twice, but is it going to be the same at all times? The answer is no. When you express anger constructively, it might make you feel like you are on top of everything. Or, even if you are expressing anger in the wrong way, for a moment, it might feel like you can rely on anger's driving force and energy to get past your problems. But eventually, you will realize that anger is not going to do you any good.

Impact on Trust

When people do not honor your anger or your emotions, you start developing a pretentious image for yourself. You might say something about yourself, which you don't actually mean. You might even think that you are actively fooling people in believing you, but those who know you very well can actually see through the fake image and that creates confusion. If you start pretending to be a person that you are not, it affects the trust between you and others. Your friends, family, colleagues and literally everyone around don't know how you are going to react or what you are going to say.

When you don’t speak about your feelings to others, they fail to recognize what is bothering you so much. This makes them think that you do not trust them that much to share the most intimate feelings of going on in your mind. Your demeanor and your tone of speaking will not match, and that will confuse others further. You start feeling even more resentful secretly and others will gradually pull themselves away from you. You will get lonely and lack people whom you can trust in your life. This can further push you into depression or even break your confidence.

Impact on Health

There are so many ways in which anger affects your health, and some of the major ones are explained below –

- **Angry outbursts are bad for heart health** – Among all other physical effects of anger, the major one is on your heart health. There are reports which suggest that people who tend to get angry very easily are the ones who are at a 19% more risk of developing heart disease than the people who remain calm. A researcher and senior lecturer from the University of Sydney – Dr. Thomas Buckley said that even though a single episode of an anger outburst might not affect your heart, getting angry consistently definitely deteriorates your cardiac health. He also mentioned how intense anxiety or anger could lead to an increase in blood pressure and heart rate, which leads to increased clotting and tightening in the blood vessels. All of this constitutes the initial stage or triggers for a heart attack. Dr. Buckley and his team also examined a total of three hundred heart attack patients to collect some data. They were asked to rate their anger over the past 48 hours of their heart attack and they were asked to do this on a seven-point scale. So, according to

the scale, one meant calm, five meant intense anger levels while seven meant completely out of control anger. According to the data collected, the risk of a heart attack was 8.5 times higher within two hours of a person experiencing intense anger of level five or more. And, in the case of extreme anxiety, the risk was 9.5 times higher than normally what it is.

- **Anger can increase the risk of strokes** – Are you prone to becoming angry or lashing out at someone too easily? Then you definitely need to bring it under control because studies have found that people who have done that have a risk of three times more risk of having a stroke within two hours. This can happen due to bleeding or a blood clot in the brain. Also, for those in whom one of the arteries in their brain had aneurysm, the risk automatically doubles, and so they have a six times higher risk of having a stroke. The two hour time frame before a stroke is very important. It is seen that in these two hours, everything starting from negative emotions to your body position changes matter the most in triggering a stroke. But negative emotions and anger are specifically two of the most common triggers for a stroke. It is also found that stroke risk increases by 14 folds whenever there is the presence of negative emotions and anger.
- **Anger worsens anxiety** – Anger and anxiety are two entities that are highly interrelated. They almost go hand in hand. When there is too much work to do, and you are not sleeping well or feeling overworked at all times, it leads to anxiety. But that also means that you might get irritated at the most commonplace of things that may not have triggered your anger otherwise. For example, you might get angry at your eggs not being served the right way or not getting the fruit of your choice in the market. It has been seen that a certain percentage of people prefer their routine more than others. When they are in a known environment that is the same day after day, they feel safe and grounded. But the moment there is some change in that environment, their entire balance is disturbed, and they tend to become angry. They show angry outbursts

which could have been avoided. Also, some people are angry by nature. When they cannot accomplish what they planned to or they do not get what they wanted, they not only become angry and impatient but also anxious. Then it keeps running like a cycle. When a person is angry, they become anxious and the more anxious they get, they experience a greater number of angry outbursts.

- **Anger makes your immune system weak** – When people get angry very easily or are angry almost all the time, they are the ones who get sick very often. Harvard University scientists had conducted a study to prove this. The results from the study showed that when healthy people recalled some experience from their past, which involved them getting angry, they experienced a lowering of immunoglobulin A levels, which is an important antibody and also serves as the first line of defense. The antibody protects you against all types of infections and thus, a lowering of its levels means that you are becoming more prone to diseases. The Pennsylvania State University researchers also conducted a study in which they found that negative moods can alter the responses of your immune system, and all of this, in turn, can trigger inflammation. Also, when the blood samples were collected within two hours of an angry outburst or negative emotion, the results showed the presence of inflammation biomarkers in greater intensity. On the contrary, when the subjects experienced positive moods, no matter how small the duration was, the levels of inflammation biomarkers drastically reduced thus showing the good effects of a positive mood on your immune system. But the investigators had also specified that this observation was seen in male participants only.
- **Anger can affect your lungs** – It has been found that when people are angry at all times, their lungs might be aging faster. A study was conducted in the Harvard School of Public Health, which is located in Boston, and the study was performed on a group of 670 men for an approximate time span of 8 years. The average age of the men in the group was 62 when the study commences. To be precise, the men were

in the age group of 45 to 86 years old. All of them were white, and they all resided in Boston. A hostility questionnaire was prepared for them which they had to answer. The more the score, the greater was the level of hostility. The average score that was recorded from these men was that of 18.5. Then, every 3 to 5 years, these same men were subjected to checkups for examining their lungs. It was recorded that men who were ruled out to be hostile were the ones who had the worst lung health. Also, there was a rapid decrease in their lung health than those who are in a mellower state. With age, it is natural for your lung to become weak but in the hostile men, this process of aging came faster and with greater intensity. It is also true that smoking is a habit commonly seen in hostile men but even if the smoking levels were adjusted, no change was seen in the lung condition of the hostile men. But the study did not actually prove a relationship between anger and lung health.

- **Anger leads to depression** – Angry outbursts and depression have been linked to each other for a long time. This is even more consistent in men. The more commonly seen type of anger in depressed people is that of passive anger where people ruminate, but they don't actually take any positive step that might help them in some way or the other. The most effective advice for anyone suffering from depression and also having anger issues would be not to overthink matters and keep them simple. Also, keeping yourself busy usually works. You need to find some activity in your life which will keep you at your toes or will completely absorb all your attention so that you don't have time to think about anything else. Research has stated that when depressed people experience sensitivity to rejection or some actual form of loss or even narcissistic vulnerability, that is when anger stems from their depressed state. They also drown themselves in guilt because they constantly worry about the fact that their anger will one day destroy all their personal relationships. Thus, they turn towards directing all their anger towards themselves and thus end up having very low self-esteem and even go into denial.

- **Anger can shorten your life-span –** When people are not able to express their anger socially, they carry that burden in the form of resentments. They keep bottling up their feelings. They replay the same angry outburst in their head over and over again, and they ruminate. All of this will ultimately make them feel overwhelmed, and they are not able to concentrate on anything in their life. Also, they lose control over everything in their life the moment they are not able to express frustrations. All this stress affects your life and also your lifespan. A seventeen-year span of study was conducted by the University of Michigan and they stated that couples experienced a shorter lifespan when they held their anger within themselves compared to those who know how to express their anger. That is where you need anger management therapy because it will teach you how to express your anger in a healthy manner. When you learn these strategies, you no longer have to bottle up your feelings because you will know how to tell others how you feel without hurting them.

IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS

No matter how stressful your surroundings are, you cannot use that as an excuse for your anger. That is not just, and you should not do it. Masking your anger with other feelings is simply another way of running away from it or avoiding it. All the unnecessary aggravation that you are facing in your life can be avoided, but for that, you need to identify the triggers behind your anger. You need to go through your regular routine so that you can have a glance at your usual activities because any of them can be a trigger. It can be some situation, place or even a particular time of day.

It can be something like going out with your friends to a particular café that might trigger your anger. If that is the case with you, then the solution is simple – you should try changing the location of your meet up and then see the changes in your temper. So, the moment you identify the trigger, you need to think of different ways in which you can handle the situation differently. When you know what is triggering you, you will also know how to handle it in a better way, and thus, you will be prepared come what may. When you are aware of the fact that a certain situation can trigger your anger, you will be prepared to deal with it in a more constructive manner.

ome of the usual triggers for anger have been discussed below.

Unfair Treatment

It is quite normal to feel angry when you are unfairly treated by others. Whether you are really being treated unfairly or not is not the question here. What matters is your perception of the situation or your feelings. As long as you think that the treatment done with you was unfair, irrespective of everything else, you are bound to feel angry. You need to understand that fairness is not a definite concept. You cannot say for sure that something is unjust or unfair. What may be unfair to you may be fair to the other person.

So, when someone thinks that they are being treated in an unfair manner, they are enraged, irritated, and annoyed. But you also need to understand that these unfair events are not only happening to you but to everyone around you. So, whenever you are wronged, anger is bound to get triggered. The relationship in which you have experienced the unfair treatment or the significance of the situation are the two factors that determine not only your response but also the intensity of the anger felt by you. Anger arising out of an unjust or unfair situation is very commonly seen in workplaces.

It can also happen in a simple day to day situation like when someone cuts you in the queue for purchasing tickets at the theater. Or, if you are in school or college and the teacher has given you a grade that you think is too below your talent, then you will feel that you have been treated unfairly, and it will then trigger your anger.

Overgeneralization

This is nothing but a type of cognitive distortion, and it can have quite a hefty impact on your anger. In fact, when you understand what overgeneralization actually means, you will understand why it is such a huge contributing factor to triggering your anger. If you have the habit of drawing faulty conclusions

without any solid proof to back up or maybe based on only one single incident, then it is called overgeneralizing. Overgeneralization does not only happen in one form. It has several forms as you'll learn here.

For example, you met someone new today who is from a completely different ethnic group, and after that single conversation, you form a very big opinion about that entire ethnicity. This is when you are overgeneralizing. A single interaction or one person's behavior does not indicate the nature of an entire group. Overgeneralization also involves the usage of words like 'always,' 'never,' 'everybody,' and so on. So, even if a person has occasionally experienced something, by overgeneralizing the same, they make it look like intolerable. So, exaggeration of the actual details can make the situation look like what it is not, and the truth becomes twisted.

It can be called black and white thinking as people tend to overlook the grays of life. And all of this leads to anger. Nothing in the world is 100 percent wrong or right, so when people see it that way and give it to dichotomous thinking, they start becoming frustrated over the simple things of life. Thus, anyone who has the habit of overgeneralization gets angry very easily. The moment you identify it, you need to take steps to change your way of thinking and reevaluate every moment in life that you see in black or white.

Disrespect of Personal Space

Personal boundaries are extremely important in every aspect of life. If someone violates or disrespects your personal space, then it can obviously act as an anger trigger. But boundary violations can be of different types like accidental, passive-aggressive, or aggressive. Accidental violations of someone's boundaries are not done of purpose, and it is when a person accidentally states his/her opinion respectfully only to find out later that you found it offensive. But whether the violation of your personal space was accidental or not, it can still

trigger your anger in equal amounts.

Passive-aggressive violation of boundaries includes behaviors such as making assumptions about someone when you don't really know them, gossiping about them or interrupting them. On the other hand, aggressive violations are the ones that are done in a more straightforward way.

Obsessing Over 'Musts' and 'Shoulds'

When people get obsessed with the 'shoulds' and 'musts' of life, they get into a cycle of destructive thinking, which is very difficult to break through. These people have a very rigid thinking process, and they view the world in a certain light that they are not willing to change. The moment the reality is not in line with their vision is when they start becoming angry at anything and everything that comes in their way. You need to ask yourself whether you do this as well because if you do, then this is one of your anger triggers.

When there is a part of you that thinks or wants to think in a certain way that you think is ideal, you automatically pave the way for the creation of an inner critic that is fault-finding and always judgmental. So, this, in turn, puts you under pressure to act in a certain manner and follow the rules that you have set in your mind. And when you are not able to follow all the rules, you feel guilty and angry with yourself. This can lead to depression, anxiety, and self-hatred, and behaviors like withdrawal, procrastination, and obsession are seen.

Sometimes, these people also try to impose their clear-cut objectives onto others and expect others to behave in a certain way. They start being the same amount of judgmental with others. They develop a feeling of demandingness, and it is true that others have their own thoughts, and they might

not always act according to what you think is right for them. That is when the anger sets in. Sometimes, these ‘shoulds’ and ‘musts’ are imposed on how you think of the world as well. You might think that your investment ‘should’ give you at least 5% returns or that everything ‘should’ be hassle-free. But this kind of thought process leads to despair and a very low tolerance level in life. That is also why people easily get frustrated and give in to anger.

Mind Reading

Just like overgeneralization, mind reading is also a type of bias in your thinking process. It is associated with making faulty assumptions and drawing conclusions and then getting angry apparently for no reason at all. In mind reading, the person assumes that he/she already knows what the person in front of them is thinking. But mind reading is practiced without any control; it leads to so many problems in life. For example, if someone rejects your call, you might simply assume that they are fed up with you, but in reality, it might be something completely different. Maybe that person was in the middle of something important and that is why he/she could not pick up your call.

So, sometimes it happens that what triggers your anger is not the incident itself, but what you thought the incident is. Your feelings and your thoughts play a big role in your actions, and so when you find that things are not going along the line of what you wanted, you might automatically form a preconceived notion about that situation. This notion might not at all be the truth but trigger your anger anyway. And more often than not, people who have the habit of mind reading do not even bother to ask that person why he/she did what they did. Their explanation might actually give you a valid reason behind their actions. But since you perceive yourself as an accurate mind reader, you will consider your thoughts to be the truth and this can trigger your anger as your thoughts might be something that disrespects you. For example, if a car overtakes your car, it might simply be because the driver has some important event to attend but you might get angry because you thought that the driver

looked down upon you and that is why he sped past your car.

It might sound humorous to you now, but this type of thinking can be really toxic and happens quite frequently to almost everyone.

Collecting Straws

This habit is when a person deliberately looks for things that he/she can be upset about. They do this by blowing past all the positive things surrounding them and putting all their concentration on the negative things only. These small incidences which irritate you start building and accumulating, and they keep piling up until the very last straw is reached. That is when you cannot keep it all inside and explode. These situations or things on which you are getting angry do not have to be something huge. They are usually things that are relatively minor.

If someone has a strong anger-habit, then they do this quite more often than others. It might be only a few hours, but these people will be successfully collecting several reasons to be angry about in those few hours only. The final straw in this habit is the actual trigger, which pushes the person off the cliff and starts an emotional apocalypse. Now, you must be wondering how the process of collecting straws works. There is a term in psychology called confirmation bias, and it is the basis of this habit of collecting straws.

Human beings find only those things which they are actually determined to find. You use your mental filters in your subconscious mind and then always end up finding evidence that supports your current beliefs and prejudices. If you believe that everybody hates you, then there is no way in which you will see the evidence that contradicts. You will stick to what you think and find events or situations which support your thinking.

Blaming

When plans go the wrong way or you don't get what you were looking for. Then it is quite easy to say that it was not your fault and maybe it was someone else because of whom all this happened. You do not take responsibility for any of your actions. People use the process of blaming as nothing but a type of defensive strategy that assists you in somehow preserving your sense of self-esteem. But does that really help you out in the long run? The answer is no. When you find that some thought or feeling is being too uncomfortable, you automatically tend to disown it by blaming things on others or even on situations. The tendency to start blaming arises from a sense of shame. Blaming also shows another important thing, that is, the habit of a person not being responsible for things they have done.

In other words, blaming can also be called a form of emotional avoidance, which helps someone to evade feelings that are shameful or uncomfortable. People who have chronic anger issues are the ones who take the help of blaming all too often. When these people find that they are in a situation where they have to hide their flaws, that is when they take the help of blame. When a person is blaming someone else for something, they are also enhancing their sense of victimhood and thus fostering feelings of pessimism and powerlessness.

It is true that being responsible for the things that you have done may not always be easy, and sometimes it might also trigger anxiety. But this anxiety is also the reason why people search for a distraction and end up using the blame game to escape from their reality. It is also associated with self-reflection. Through self-reflection, you can understand yourself better, but it is not easy to do that so people try to find the easy way out and that is – blame.

Getting Attacked

The next trigger that we are going to talk about is violence or being attacked by someone physically. Being a true victim in any violent situation is not good, and it definitely leads to angry outbursts. But some people can also respond to the situation with depression or anxiety. Abuse can be blatant or even subtle. The abuse can be done to you from someone in your family, or your partner or even a stranger. The abuse can also be some kind of war trauma, especially if you served for the army at some point in your life. Any random accident or violent incident can leave a mark on someone's mind that is strong enough to act as a trigger throughout their life and cause anger issues.

Discrimination and Prejudice

One of the main causes of human conflict is prejudice and discrimination. When people have a prejudiced attitude towards a particular group, they behave differently or treat them differently, and if you happen to fall in that group, then you will feel angry at the discrimination being done with you. Racism is one of the most common issues. Sexism is also included in this category. Sexism is usually about the biases towards women that are preconceived by men. Both sexism and racism can be subtle or even practiced vigorously. Sexism is something that exists in our day-to-day lives at the very societal level, whether it is about education or employment opportunities. But the same is true for racism too.

Another form of discrimination that is now being acknowledged is homophobia. Some people become quite rigid and passionate about the discriminatory feelings they have in life. But the person who falls in that particular group that is being seen in a different light is the one who suffers, and every small day-to-day activity of discrimination becomes a trigger for their anger.

EXPRESSING ANGER HEALTHILY AND APPROPRIATELY

Do you ever feel that you have reached such a point where your anger is going to swallow you whole, and you are simply going to burst with rage? If yes, then this chapter is going to teach you how you can express and release all that anger but in a healthier manner so that you don't end up hurting anyone. Most of the time, you will find yourself justifying your anger no matter what the reason behind it was. But as I mentioned at the beginning of this book, anger can actually teach you a lot of things only if you know how to express it in a healthy way. You should never bottle up your emotions as they can really cause havoc to your health.

Anger sometimes can be used by people to cloud other complex emotions. The most common example is that of men and how they are forced by society not to show any feelings of sadness or fear. But they do have these feelings because they are human. The years and years of suppressed emotions make anger as their outlet, and in that case, the primary emotion is not anger but something else.

If you hold back your anger just because you think you might go wrong while expressing it, that anger is going to destroy you completely. Your body will want to get rid of the negative energy that is being

held in the form of anger, but your mind might be telling you the opposite. That is when you go into a state of emotional paralysis.

Some of the effective ways in which you can release your anger healthily and appropriately are given below –

Go For a Walk

Did you know that you can actually walk off your anger? Yes, it can be done. Walking has a lot of benefits, and one of the major ones is that of releasing all the accumulated stress from your body. When you are angry, you might feel like hitting someone or even firing someone from your team even though they didn't do anything gravely wrong. But none of these are actually good options. If you indeed decide to give in to these options, you will regret later on. So, what is a better option? The better option would be to go and take a walk.

You do not always have to go out to take a walk. If you live in a house with a big lawn or terrace, you can take a walk there. Alternatively, if you are in your office and it has some space where you can get yourself moving, just do that. Also, if there is a park nearby, you can go and take a walk there too. When you go for a walk, you not only assist your body in releasing all the bad energy, but you also stop yourself from saying something stupid that you will regret later. So, no matter with whom you had the argument, it is always a good idea to go and take a walk so that you can resume your work with a clear mind.

Hit a Ball

For some people, engaging in a sport that involved hitting a ball is what helps the most when they are angry. You can try it out too to see whether it is something that works for you as well. Some of the sports that you can try are volleyball, tennis, or even golf. You can also join a boxing class and start

punching on that bag. You will feel the anger seep out of your body with every punch. If you are a swimmer, just go to the pool and take a dip. It will cool you off instantly.

Do Yoga

Yoga is considered to be one of the best ways to let off steam. It is quite natural to think that only high-intensity exercises can help you cool off. But that is not true. It is, of course, the usual norm to think challenging exercises are the only healthy options for expressing your anger, but once you try yoga, you are bound to change your point of view. A gentle and fluid yoga session can do wonders for your mental state. As you take in each breath, all the tension and negativity that piles up inside you will start getting eliminated from your body. All of the stress will slowly melt away, and you will feel lighter.

All you have to do is focus all your thoughts on yoga postures and breathing techniques. Keep all the frustration aside, and don't think about that angry episode anymore. You will see how miraculously your mind will be transported to a blissful state where there is no anger or frustration but only peace. Taking deep breaths is one of the ways that is advised to every person dealing with anger issues, and yoga is where you have to take a lot of deep breaths along with several postures that pave the way for energy flow through your body.

Engage in a Non-strenuous Exercise

When you are angry and want to release that anger, tiring out your body is the best way to do it, and that is why you should try out some moderate exercise that will not be too strenuous. Your aim should be not to overstimulate your body but to tire it. But if you are doing a prolonged exercise regime that does not really feel well can put your health at risk when practiced at a state of anger. You can consider hitting the gym for half an hour, where you can lift some mild weights or run on the treadmill or even do some bicycling. You can also try out some

stretching exercises. You should match the exercise with your overall level of fitness and your age.

Exercising releases endorphins in your body, which can make you feel good and release the stress.

Meditation

Anger, as you must have understood by now, is a very complex emotion. When someone gets angry or frustrated, the first step that anyone takes it to act out. But with meditation, you will learn newer methods to control yourself from acting out and reach a more productive and responsive mindset that is balanced. One of the game-changers in any anger management lesson is learning to meditate. If you do it on a daily basis, you can see the change for yourself. There are different types of meditation that you can practice to keep a check on your anger.

Journaling

Next, we come to a very important part of this chapter, which we are going to discuss in depth because it is one of the most effective ways of expressing anger in an appropriate manner. But many people tend to confuse journaling with keeping an anger journal. You need to understand that they are two completely different entities. The main role of an anger diary is to help you monitor your anger and its triggers every day. With the help of an anger diary, you can note down how many times you were on the verge of losing your calm, how many times you actually lost it, and you can also note down the intensity of the feelings at that particular moment.

But a journal is something completely different and has much more information than an anger diary. In an anger journal, you are explaining each and every experience in words. You are describing your feelings in detail, and you are also noting down the context in which you got angry. In

short, you are assigning words to your feelings. So, they are more revealing. The journals don't only contain the fact that you got angry. They tell you way more than that about yourself. Also, you can tell your diary about the things you cannot tell others.

With the help of an anger journal, you can tell your story the way you want to. You can make any confession that you want and pour out all those hurtful experiences and unpleasant emotions that you cannot gather up the courage to tell anyone else. Here are some things to keep in mind while making this anger journal –

- **The audience in your writing should be you**

When you are composing your anger journal, make sure that you make yourself the audience as well as the narrator. This would make it feel like a private conversation with your inner self. You would also know that this confession remains private. When you are not confessing in front of others, there is no need to frame your story in a way to impress others or make someone else feel good.

No matter how much I emphasize on this fact, it will not be enough. Your anger journal will be a dialogue with your inner self and not with anyone else. The journal is meant for your benefit alone and not someone else's.

- **Write in the first person**

One of the most difficult things to do while making a confession is to write in the first person, but you should do that anyway. In general, people are accustomed to the habit of judging their own feelings and emotions, with the parameter being the actions of other people. This makes you feel every emotion in the third person. An example would make this clearer. If you say ‘The cab driver made me so angry,” then it is more about the cab driver than it is about you. But the moment you rephrase it to “I was so angry at the cab driver,” you are acknowledging your anger and not someone else’s action. You immediately become the person responsible for your emotions and that is how it should be.

Also, when you use the third person in your confessions, you are victimizing yourself. It has been noticed that such a habit of creating an image of a victim makes the person even angrier. The aim of this exercise is to help you accomplish a better self and not make you angry.

- **Don’t stress so much on grammar**

You don’t have to be great in English in order to get the benefits of an anger journal. Who cares whether your grammar is right or not! Your anger journal is meant for you and not for someone to evaluate the grammar errors you have made. The more important fact here is to pour in all your feelings while writing the journal. The moment you assign words to your feelings is when you feel the tension releasing. You no longer have to keep all those unexpressed thoughts, feelings, and emotions suppressed because now you have an outlet to let all of that seep out. Another benefit of this anger journal is

that you will be educating yourself about the various aspects of your own emotions.

So, all the things like punctuation, spelling, and grammar are completely irrelevant matters in this case. What you should do is write carelessly and spontaneously. You do not always have to possess a clear sense of purpose as well because you need to write in your journal with your heart and not your mind. All your raw emotions should be there.

- **Write about all your negative emotions**

If you keep your positive feelings and emotions suppressed, they will not make you feel bad or sick, but keeping your negative emotions locked up will definitely affect you in several ways. So, whatever negative thoughts or feelings pop up in your mind, just pour your heart out. If you keep them inside, they will poison your life and not let you achieve your full potential. You might not be so expert in the terminology of emotions, but you should try not to generalize everything into one. For example, you might actually experience rage but name it as anger just because you do not know the word. That is an example of the wrong expression of your feelings. If you do not express yourself in the right way, you will not get the satisfaction you should.

- **Try to form causal connections**

imply writing down your emotions or feelings is not enough. You need to ask

yourself why you felt the way you did. It is true that acknowledgment of all the negative emotions definitely helps in purging them from your body, but it does not help in giving you insight. In order to gain full control over your anger, you need to understand your anger issues, and so you need to give meaning to your feelings.

- **Always set aside time from your daily routine to write**

You should not write in your journal just because you had to. You have to mean it. So, it is better to plan your day in a way that you will always have some time in your hand on a daily basis, which you can utilize to write. Keep at least twenty to thirty minutes' time for your journal. But you should keep a timer while you are writing. When you are spending less time, it means that you are not writing enough or emphasizing enough. On the contrary, when you are taking more time, you might end up overthinking.

Also, on some days, you might really finish writing before the timer. But you should not get up. Instead, revise what you have written and see if there is anything on which you can expand more. Trust me on this. There will always be some emotions that can be tapped further only if you give more emphasis or think deeply.

- **Stop your emotions from coming in the way**

When you start journaling for the first time, you will feel content and relieved after you write your feelings down. And to be honest, this is what the goal of anger journaling is. But after a certain point of time, it is completely natural for your emotions to come flooding in. These emotions can be that of nervousness, apprehension, or even sadness. You need to remind yourself that all of these emotions are quite normal. You are brave in confronting all those suppressed emotions altogether, and so being upset once in a while is normal. But if these feelings come to you while you are writing the journal, don't let them stop you from completing that day's entry.

In case the emotions are becoming unbearable, you can stop for a day or two and then see whether they come back after the break.

- **Eliminate all forms of judgment**

Everyone is judgmental by nature, but while you are writing your journal, you need to eliminate all those feelings and write openly. Be forthright and honest with yourself. You need to remind yourself that whatever you write in your journal is for you. No one else in the world is going to read that, so you need not worry about what others are going to think of you. Stop criticizing your own emotions. If you are someone who is used to overanalyzing everything in life, then it is in your habit to criticize. But gradually, you should try to eliminate that habit and become a less emotionally constricted person.

HOW TO TURN AWAY FROM ANGER IN NEGATIVE SITUATIONS?

ANY ANGER OUTBURST starts with being annoyed, and that is the first stage of anger and also the mildest. There is nothing to worry about this stage, but the problem lies when annoyance is pushed to become anger. This chapter will teach you how you can avoid that from happening.

When you are angry, you set your mind on something, and you want that really bad. You go into a state where you are willing to do anything to get what you wanted. But it is important to develop the ability to walk away as well because that is equally important. You may not know about the consequences, but not walking away can cause you a lot more harm than you can imagine. Angry people often have the mentality that if they don't protest or say anything, then they will end up with nothing but nothing is better than rage.

Yes, it is true that walking away takes more courage than you can imagine. But it also means that you respect yourself more than anything else, and so you don't want to give your anger the power to destroy everything. Anger is not permanent. It comes, and it goes but the people you love will not turn up at your doorstep one fine day if you end up saying hurtful words to them.

Turning your petty annoyance into an extreme rage is not that difficult a think. It happens very fast and very frequently too. There is a saying that you should never interrupt the course of your emotions and that you should let them flow. But that is not true in the case of anger. The moment you detect anger, you need to take control of it before it gains the upper hand on you.

Some people have simply got a short temperament, and they get angry very easily. Although there is not much that you can do about your temperament, but you can definitely do something to walk away from the negative situations in your life. By the end of this chapter, you will become a more optimistic person who does not answer to the provocations of anger.

Tips to Stop Your Anger Levels at Annoyance

You will come across situations in your life where others will push your buttons to make that simple feeling of annoyance intensify and then become angry or worse – rage. Here are some tips to avoid that from happening.

- *You need to maintain your perspective no matter what.* See every situation for what it is and not anything more than that. If someone overtakes you on the road, then it is nothing more than that. You do not have to start thinking that the person has some personal enmity with you.
- *Never take things personally*. The person who overtook you may have done it because he has something important for which he is getting late. That person might not even know you. So, the situation is not about you at all, and you should keep it that way.
- *Stop blaming others*. The moment you engage in the blame game, you give a pass to your annoyance, and it starts escalating. So, you simply need to let it go.
- *Steer clear of revenge*. The second step to blame is usually revenge, but

you need to walk on a different path. You need to figure out more important things to spend your energy on.

- *Also, look for an alternative way out of the situation*. You can be annoyed with someone, and that's fine, but you should always strive to express your anger in ways that won't start an argument. You can also put on some good music to divert your mind from the incident.
- *Never victimize yourself*. Whenever you are amidst an annoying situation, you should take the responsibility to take some action that is appropriate. If you behave like the victim, your annoyance will intensify and take the shape of anger.
- *Stop your emotions from getting magnified by negativity*. When you are flooded with negative emotions, they tend to make you angrier. So, you need to find ways in which you can fill yourself with positive vibes only.

Walk Away and Come Back with a Calm Temperament

Walking away from an argument does not make you a loser. In fact, sometimes, it is the right thing to do. Since your body is wired to show a fight-or-flight mechanism in the face of anger, your behavior is directed by the same. No matter what the issue was, you should not answer to the provocations. Being angry and showing it physically or completely fleeing from the situation and not coming face-to-face ever again are the two extreme options, and none of them are useful.

When you decide to meet the issue head-on in your angry state, the risk is that your anger might escalate (and that is what happens in general). But if you retreat from the situation completely, you keep your negative feelings bottled up only to explode later. So, you need to strike a balance between both and come up with a third option, and that is – you should return to the issue later once you have calmed yourself down. This is also a mature way to handle conflicting situations in life.

Don’t Be Eager to Have the Last Word

The problem with most arguments is that people always want to have the last word for themselves. Any argument or starts with some kind of social interaction. This means that the first word was definitely spoken by someone, and that first word is also the provocation. That is what triggers the anger. But after that, the question becomes who is going to have the last word? You need to remind yourself that this is not any competition that you have to win. You can always let someone else have the last word. And the sooner you understand this, the better it is for you. You should not be willing to let everything go wild and out of hand.

People usually get obsessed about having the last word in an argument, and in that frenzy, they completely overlook how the situations are molding themselves in a worse condition. If there is one thing about anger management that remains a universal truth then that is – it is not about the outcome but about the process.

Change Your Situation

Emotions don’t act on their own, and they are entirely situational. To be more precise, emotions are always tied to something, and they do not act on their own. So, when you stay in a situation that is provocative, you cannot really turn off your anger. In order to break the cycle, you need to change the situation. Until and unless you get a grip on yourself, move to a different situation.

You will often find psychologists telling their patients to emotionally distance themselves from the object of their torment. One of the easiest ways to achieve this is to move physically and geographically from the concerned situation.

Stop Ruminating

First, let us discuss what rumination actually is. Have you ever noticed how a cow keeps chewing its cud? It first chews the food and then regurgitates it to chew it all over again. Rumination is something similar that humans do with their thoughts. They keep reconsidering, rethinking, and reliving their bad memories over and over again. If there has been some incident that made you angry, you need to stop ruminating about it. This is because rumination always intensifies whatever emotion you already have inside of you. What has happened has already happened. There is no way in which you can change it.

So, how can you actually escape this cycle? The first step is to catch yourself in the process of rumination. When you do that, you need to say ‘Stop’ and simultaneously think about something else that will divert your mind. You can keep saying ‘stop’ to yourself as many times as you want until it finally registers in your mind. After that, you will slowly be able to let go of all those emotions and feelings that are causing you to hold on to that anger.

If the above-mentioned technique does not work for you, then you can try another thing. Try ruminating about something good instead of your negative emotions. This process is also termed as daydreaming. You can think about your dreams and aspirations or maybe picture yourself doing one of the things in your bucket list.

Use Imagery

Anger can be quite a chronic experience, just like pain, and you can use guided imagery to help yourself manage anger. Here are the steps that you should follow –

- First, you need to find a place to sit, which will be quiet, and there

should be no distraction. You will not be able to reap the benefits of imagery if your surroundings distract you. If you are in your home, then you can go into your room and tell others not to disturb you for a while. If you are in your office, then you can find a place in a nearby park, or you can also put up a do not disturb sign on the door.

- The next step is to rate your anger. On a scale of 1 to 10, you need to rate how intense your anger is.
- Visualization forms the basis of this technique, and so the next step is to close your eyes. Now, your task is to visualize something that will help you overcome your intense feelings of anger. In case you are not okay with you sitting with closed eyes in a space, it means you have chosen the wrong location. The place you choose for this exercise must be one where you can feel safe sitting with your closed eyes.
- Now, you need to let go of the real world so that you can take your first step into the world of imagery. For this, you also have to let go of the anger that you are holding on to.
- The next step is to imagine positive things or things that make you happy. You can conjure up sceneries from your dream destination or maybe a life achievement that you want. It can also be sitting in your own living room and having a good time with your family. It can be anything, but whatever it is, it should be strong enough to replace your emotions of anger.
- You cannot be vague in your imagination. Be as specific as you can. You need to decide who you want with you in the imagination or whether you want to see yourself alone. You also need to imagine the location and exactly what you are doing. The more detailed images you conjure up, the more real it will feel and, thus, will be more effective.
- The main aim of this exercise is to derail your mind from the anger, and in order to do so, you need to keep up the happy image in your mind for at least five minutes. Five minutes might sound less now, but you cannot believe how refreshing you will feel after those five minutes.
- Now, when you are in the middle of your imagination, you need to rate

your anger again. You need to see what difference is there between the ratings that you have given. If there is a difference, then you have been successful in overcoming your anger, but if there is no difference, then you have to gather up more energy to derail the anger in your mind.

- You can linger for some time in that state if you loved the exercise because it will make you feel good. You will get inner peace from this state where there is no tension in your body. There should be no hurry to return to your real surroundings.
- Now, it is time for you to open your eyes and resume your usual routine but only with a more refreshed mind.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WHEN YOU ARE ANGRY?

COMMUNICATION IS the key to every emotion. When you lose your temper, you not only have to keep a check on what you say but also on how you are saying it. So, in this chapter, you will learn how you can communicate your anger effectively.

Stop Venting

It is true that when you are venting, you are actually clearing up all the stored emotions that you have been keeping trapped for so long, but it has consequences too. When you are venting, you are emitting rage. Most people would tell you that venting helps, but I am telling you right here, right now that it doesn't. People expect a certain emotional relief when they vent but you are not actually going to get that. Also, all the problems which led to the anger in the first place are not going to get automatically solved by your venting as well. But do you know what it does? It does the opposite of all these things. If you are feeling aggressive, venting will simply magnify that. If you are angry, it will make you angrier.

When you are screaming hurtful words at someone else, you are doing nothing but showing your raw anger. This doesn't make sense because the person you are shouting at cannot really understand as to why you are angry. So, instead of venting, if you tell him/her the reason behind your

anger, say their inconsiderate behavior, then that would be something useful. That person might then start analyzing their own behavior and think about what needs correction. Calling derogatory names at someone never helps. Instead of doing that, try articulating your anger, then you would be forcing the other person to rethink.

If you practice what I just said, then you will understand that sharing your feelings and speaking out is definitely one of the best ways to reduce your anger. Also, when you are venting, you are actually wrapping yourself up in your own drama and nothing else. You go down a bottomless pit until the point of no return, that is, you have hurt the person in front of you way too much that you would have wanted in your right senses. You might feel empowered for a bit while you are venting, but when you think about it after calming down, you will be the one regretting your actions.

Start Talking Instead of Hitting

You would often read about letting off steam by hitting a punching bag or a pillow. But honestly, the truth is, you cannot really get away with your anger by punching things. It is often thought that an energetic fury can let out the pent up anger inside you. What happens is that a connection forms between aggression and anger the moment you take any physical action. The link was already present, but taking action reinforces it, and it becomes strong. Physical aggression usually arises when you are unable to articulate the pent up anger and frustration inside of you. So, what is the solution?

The next time you feel like hitting something or someone when you are angry, you need to think of a term or a label for your anger. For example, ask yourself whether you are irritated or annoyed or in rage? You can even write this down if it makes things easier. You should not focus on your thoughts here but on your emotions and feelings. You might have thoughts in

your head that say a lot about the other person and how mean he/she is. But that is not what you are trying to do here. It is not about them. You are trying to figure out your emotions, and so you need to focus on exactly what you are feeling and label it.

Then, your next step is to identify the trigger. We already spoke about triggers in the previous chapters, and you know how you can find out what your trigger was. So, use that process and then find out what exactly made you so angry. Sometimes, you might be astonished by your findings. Anger isn't always what it seems from the outside. So, if you feel that you are angry because someone said bad things, it might not be the real reason after all. The real reason might be some complex emotion that is there at the back of your head for the past few days, and you simply acted out when you were no longer able to contain it.

Next, you need to ask yourself what would make you feel better and help you return back to your calm state. You are already one step ahead in your anger management program when you go through all these steps.

Writing vs. Speaking

Sometimes when you are simply too angry with someone, it is better not to speak but to write your feelings down. When you speak, it might happen that your anger goes out of control, and you end up saying things you never meant in the first place. And this type of feeling is usually uncontrollable. So, what you can do is take a piece of paper and write down all that you are feeling. You can either do it in the form of a journal, or there is one more thing that you can do. You can write it down in the form of a letter but you are not going to give that letter right now.

Just take your time and write down what you want to say to the person you are angry upon. Then, keep the letter aside and read it later on when you have calmed down. You will be able to analyze what you really felt and what was magnified by anger. Now, you can gather up your thoughts and go for a one-on-one conversation with that person because now you know what exactly you want to say. This will help you by communicating only the things that are needed to be said. If you had done it earlier in your angry state, the possibility was that you would have ended at hurling bad words. No meaningful sentences would have come out of your mouth. So, avoid speaking to the person when you are in a state of rage. Write it down and say it later after analyzing it properly.

Enlarge Your Vocabulary

When you are in trouble, anger often gets the best of you. If you search on the internet, you will see that there are tons of synonyms for anger, but not all of them have the same meaning. Yes, these words might have meanings that are close, but keep in mind that they are not at all the same. There will always some shade of emotion that makes them different. So, in order to help you out, I have explained some of the words which can be helpful while you are trying to communicate in your state of anger.

- **Annoyed** – This is usually the first stage when you are just mildly irritated or frustrated with someone. Suppose someone at work parks in your area, and you are annoyed. But when you speak with them regarding the matter and they apologize, that is the end of the matter until the person repeats the same mistake again and again, and your anger levels start rising.
- **Offended** – Offended is a bit more than annoyed, and it usually happens when someone does something that you did not really expect them to.
- **Sullen** – This is sort of a visual thing, and in this case, anger manifests

itself in you in certain ways. For example, when a person is sullen, he/she usually sits in a corner away from everybody else and avoids eye contact. A very closely related word for sullen is gloomy.

- **Uptight** – This can be called as jittery or tense, but it has more of a retro vibe to it.
- **Exasperated** – You know those situations in your life when you think you will no longer be able to sit with patience and tolerate what is going on? Exasperated is used to describe such a situation. It can also be described to be a situation when you are annoyed at a very high level.
- **Indignant** – It can be a tough expression to explain, but it is usually when someone makes remarks that are unjust or insulting. It might sound similar to offended, but it has a stronger feeling.
- **Resentful** – Now, you might see resentful being used all the time, but do you know what it really means to be resentful? Well, suppose you do all the hard work at the office but your boss gives all the credit to someone else. Then, the feeling you get is called being resentful, and it is very closely attached to your ego.
- **Bitter** – Now, this is when you take your levels of resentment a bit higher. You feel an intense level of antagonism.
- **Irate** – This is often explained to a situation where you are simply mad. This word is not used much and is kind of old-fashioned, but you should keep it in your vocabulary.
- **Furious** – As you can understand, this means you are in total fury, which means you are violent or in rage.

Also, when you are writing things or even speaking to someone, try to avoid profanity that is laced by anger because that is not going to help you. If you call someone an idiot, you might think you are communicating your anger, but you are not. Try using any of the above-mentioned words to say how angry you are. If you think about yourself in that person's shoes, how would you

feel is someone else called you an idiot? Not good, right? So, don't say it to anyone else either.

Stay Focused On What You Want to Say

It often happens that when people actually start to communicate, they forget what the real issue was. They completely lose sight of the incident that provoked them in the first place. You simply jump from one issue to another, stating all your grievances along a line of tangent but actually forget about the main issue at hand. What might have started out as 'You didn't come to pick me up' might end up in something like 'You don't care for me at all.' You start generalizing situations.

The tendency of going out of line happens even more when your anger levels are soaring. Your emotion itself will distract you from what you actually wanted to say. And you will be so unfocused with blind rage that you won't even remember why you started the quarrel anyway. So, you need to stay focused on what you want to communicate and why you are angry. Prevent things from getting out control by keeping your eyes fixed on the issue.

Don't Stretch the Issue

Expressing your anger in a constructive manner can be a challenge in the first few days of anger management. But you have to understand that it is more like a give-and-take proposition. You are allowing others to take in the meaning of what you say by giving out your feelings in those words. But you will end losing your audience if you keep ranting and not say stuff that has meaning in them. I am not telling you to keep your anger suppressed. You need to talk about what you felt, but you need to keep it short.

If you keep reiterating the same thing over and over again, the chance is that your audience will stop listening to you after a certain point. Researches in the neurological field have also pointed out the fact that human beings can be fed only so much information at a time. The brain is wired to remember only limited information. So, speak for a minute and then take a deep breath. This is also helpful in staying focused, which we already discussed in the previous section. Taking breaks in between will also give you the other person ample scope to respond to what you just said.

Also, taking deep breaths in between will prevent the acceleration of your anger. And that is the aim of anger management, right? Sometimes, the person you are speaking to may react defensively and say a lot of bad things too. But you should not interrupt and let them have their say. After you have taken the pause, resume what you were saying. Then, after a minute, take another deep breath. Once you practice this for a few times, it will start becoming easier.

It Is More Important How You Say It Rather Than What You Say

When you are in the middle of an overheated dialogue, and you are literally shouting at the other person, what you are trying to say often gets lost amidst all that chaos. It is not impossible to communicate effectively when you are angry but apart from what you have already learned in this chapter; there are two more things that you have to pay attention to –

- **Volume –** The fullness of your words and the power you put into them are of utmost importance here. You will sound louder when you are angry, and it keeps on increasing with the intensity of your anger. When you hear someone talking, you don't need any special skills to identify a person who is furious and in rage from the person who is simply annoyed.
- **Pace –** The velocity or the speed with which you are speaking is also

important. You will often find that you tend to speak faster with an increase in the intensity of your anger. You may even feel pressure as if the words are not coming out of your mouth as fast as you want them to.

So, you need to start paying attention to how you are communicating and not only on the words. If you think you are sounding too shrill or maybe you are speaking too loudly, then you need to get a hold on yourself and adjust your speech accordingly. You need to fine-tune yourself, and this requires effort from your side. Also, when you speak loudly, the other person also tends to mimic that, and the overall conversation becomes way louder than it started out to be. Ultimately, the anger reaches such a level where it becomes impossible to control. So, your task is to nip it in the bud before it even gets the chance to off the tracks.

This anger-arousal tone often gets into a vicious cycle and can cause several health problems. It has been noticed that when people go into an outrageous dialogue exchange, they are more prone to coronary heart diseases than the others. So, whenever you think you are on the verge of losing it, simply ask a question to yourself – is this conversation even worth it risking your life? Because if you give in to your anger, you are doing nothing but risking your own cardiovascular system and wearing it out.

STEPS TO TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ANGER

THE FIRST INSTINCT that every angry person has is to react in some bad away, but that is something you should try to control. The reaction is somehow universally the same for everyone. They react, they shout, and they try to ridicule the person who is present in front of them irrespective of whether or not they did anything to contribute to the anger. But losing your calm is the easy way out. What is tough is keeping your calm and handling the situation carefully. So, here are some simple and very straightforward steps that you can implement in your life to take control of your anger before it controls you.

Step 1 – Respond, Not React

Anger, when not communicated in the right way, can lead to collective and personal suffering. Well sometimes, you might come across articles on the internet which portray anger as a choice, and that really kind of offends me. Anger is anything but choice. Anger simply happens. No one wants to be angry or in a bad mood. It is like an intuitive reaction given by your nervous system whenever it thinks that you are in some sort of danger or some immediate threat is present in front of you. So, there is no choice there. But there is a choice, and that is – how you react. It is definitely a choice to express your anger in a constructive manner or simply to carry on with your present rage.

If you are at a point in your life where you are finding it difficult to express your anger constructively, then you need to ask yourself whether you want to be a victim of your emotions for the rest of your life. I'm sure that the answer to this would be no, as no one likes to apologize countless times for all the rude things they have said. So, before you do anything, you need to make yourself understand that you have to keep a promise – the promise of not reacting when you are angry. It is basically a mental strategy. So, let us start by understanding the difference between responding and reacting. When you are reacting to something, you are usually out of control, impulsive, and reflexive. But when you are responding, you are deliberate, thoughtful, and in control.

Someone doesn't react to anger just out of the blue. It is usually a habit that they inculcate over time. So, in case you are facing difficulties in overcoming it, don't worry because it is quite natural. These difficulties that are faced by people when they try to respond rather than react usually stem from past experiences. As I said, the habit has been inculcated in you and possibly from certain incidences in your life that you never meant to happen, but they did, and they surely left a mark. Although, sometimes people inherit the impulsive temperament from either of their parents.

So, think of those moments in your past or even in your childhood that you are carrying around like baggage because these are the situations that have made you a reactive person. Sometimes, it happens because your parents were remote, unloving, unavailable, rigorous, stern, stringent or even highly sensitive. But you have to remind yourself that every habit is learned and so every habit can also be unlearned.

Step 2 – Avoid Being With People Who Get Unnecessarily Angry All the Time

When you are in the company of people who get angry all the time, then you

might find it difficult to change your behavior from reacting to responding. It is of human nature to find companionship with those who are in some way similar to you. So, when you are being with people who already have a bad temperament, you are creating hurdles for yourself, and that makes it even difficult for you to develop the habit of responding instead of reacting.

It is often seen that when a person is angry, he/she usually ends up in situations where they find a perfect fit for their emotional behavior as well. Suppose you work in an office where your colleagues and peers are literally climbing the ladder by showing anger to their subordinates; then you get into the mentality that anger somehow helps. But in reality, it does not. It only distances people from you. There is also a tendency among anti-social people to select people with anger issues as their peers. Basically, human beings look for companions who have something familiar to them.

Also, society has a way of ostracizing those who get angry very easily. This is usually done by that half of the society, which knows how to control their anger and behave in a certain way. But when you, already trying to improve, face such exclusivity, you are straightaway denied the right to correct yourself. So, when that happens, you might end up seeking up the company of those who would get your feelings, that is, people already having severe anger issues. You do this because you know that these people will condone your outbursts.

But what you actually need are people who will put up with you and help you look for alternative and constructive ways of expressing your anger. So, you need to look for people who will be nonjudgmental and patient. They should be able to teach you healthy ways by setting personal examples because nothing works better than that. But, you should also not

expect things to be the same for you, as in, you should not expect the strategies that worked for them to work for you as well. You should take inspiration but, at the same time not feel defeated when the same strategies don't apply to you.

That person should also be compassionate. They should not be demeaning you in any way and instead, understand the burden that you are carrying – the burden of anger. In case you face an emotional crisis, that person should be willing to be there for you. That is why it is advised that you look for someone who has already conquered their anger demons because they know and understand exactly what you are going through. At the same time, they should have a realistic attitude and not pretend that they are going to possess an answer to all the questions you have. You, on your part, should not make them responsible for your anger. They are there to help and not take responsibility.

So, the moral is that you need to steer clear of the flock of angry people. They can be anyone. They can be your friends, colleagues, or even your family members. It will definitely take a lot of willpower and courage on your side to walk away, but when you do, you will feel good. So, once you recognize the toxic and angry people in your life, cut them off as early as you can.

Step 3 – Assess Your Anger

If you want to prevent your anger from escalating, you need to create a self-report by assessing your anger. If you want to find out the best way of lowering your anger, you also need to find the particular intensity of your emotion. When you learn to assess your anger, you will be able to check the warning signs way earlier and thus prevent yourself from getting too angry. The more the intensity of anger is, the more time you will take to cool down as well. Achieving equilibrium is important; otherwise, you might end up saying things that you

will regret later in your life.

If you don't know where to start then how about this – whenever you catch yourself being triggered, describe the intensity with any number between 1 and 10. Here 10 will be the most severe, and 1 means mild. So, for example, if you are feeling only a bit irritated, which is barely noticeable, then you are going to rate it as 2 but if you are at full-on rage on the verge of exploding, then maybe a 9 or even 10. While rating your anger, you need to put your focus on its physical side as in how agitated or aroused you feel at that moment. Now, you need to label your anger. You need to set these levels beforehand. For example, if your anger rating is between 1 and 3, then it can be called being irritated whereas a 4 to 6 might mean just simply mad. Like this, you have to create your own levels.

When you label your anger, you also understand how close you have gone to the extreme levels. This also means that if you are at the lower levels, then there is still time for you to change or turn the other way. When your rating is 4, it means that turning the other side will take less effort than it would have taken if your anger rating was 9 or even 8. Also, labeling your anger will show you how much you are progressing. If you are starting to manage your anger issues at 8, but then after a month or so, you find yourself at 5, then it is quite an improvement.

Step 4 – Have Patience With Yourself

If you think about it carefully, then you will understand that the direct consequence of losing your patience is nothing but anger. You can call anger a transient experience because, at its very core, it definitely is. The onset of anger is just the beginning because after that comes the point where it starts to reach the peak, and that is the middle phase. And then, it starts to recede and finally, there is a resolution. You can call it the end phase. So, there is a principle of

gravity working here. Anger, in its initial stages, is meant to go up but eventually, it is going to come down. So, even if you do not put any effort, anger, by its very nature, will resolve itself no matter how much time it takes. It is usually seen that anger lasts for about five to ten minutes in an adult. So, here time is your greatest ally. You need to give your angry self the time it needs to calm down.

Patience is always a necessary quality that you need to acquire if you want to overcome all the difficult emotions in life, including anger. Being patient is one of the healthiest practices you will ever come across. It is the best antidote. You will notice that your inner self always pushed you to react and find the resolution as soon as possible when you are angry. That actually makes you do things irrespective of its consequences because you simply want a resolution and nothing else. But if you learn to be patient, you will prevent yourself from hurting others with your words or actions.

So, even if you feel that it is difficult to remain calm and patient, all you have to do is remind yourself that time is actually on your side here. If you manage to not shout or react and let the time pass by, your anger will leave your body in a few minutes. Being patient will not give you a heart attack, but an anger outburst will. If you still have difficulties in keeping your calm, just tell yourself – ‘this too shall pass.’

You also need to believe in yourself that you can actually do this. Impatience often results from the fact that people don’t believe in their own abilities and so they want things to happen now. But if you work on your self-confidence, you will learn to work with the situation at hand rather than trying to change it your way. Your body has a lot of tension and stress stored in it, and that is also why you lose patience. So, you have to figure out a

way to release all that tension, which brings me to the next point.

Step 5 – Take Deep Breaths

When you are angry, your autonomous nervous system is aroused, and it gets excited. You will literally be able to feel the adrenaline running through your veins. Your muscles become tense, your blood pressure rises, and so does your heart rate. This is your body's way of preparing itself for combat and trying to shield itself from any danger that comes its way. And this is exactly what the physical side of anger looks like. So, when you are practicing anger management and trying to be calm, you need to learn how you can reverse the process of being angry. Taking deep breaths is often helpful and here, you will learn more about it.

Just like the rush of adrenaline, everyone's body also has an inherent relaxation response. One such very effective strategy is to take a few deep breaths and sit quietly. This will help to release all that tension you are feeling in your body. So, follow these three steps, and you will feel the difference –

- Take in a long and deep breath through your nose.
- Count one and hold your breath for that long.
- Now, exhale the breath but through your mouth.

Now, all you have to do is repeat the same for around 10 times. If the intensity of your anger is more, then you can repeat it for as long as you like. But you need to focus on your breathing and be conscious about it. When you are exhaling, just think of the word 'release.' It will act as an imaginary command for your body to release all the stored negative energy.

You also need to try and lighten up. The more serious remain, the angrier you are going to get. One of the best ways to do it is by practicing self-talk. But, make sure you engage in positive self-talk only. You need to tell yourself with reassurance that you are okay, and you can do it. There is nothing to be upset about.

Deep breathing is often associated with so many other things as well, like yoga, meditation, or even guided imagery. All of them start with taking deep breaths because it helps your mind to achieve equilibrium by returning to a calm state.

Step 6 – Ask These Questions

There are some very important questions that you need to ask yourself if you want to control your anger. Asking a question is the best way to manage the unknown because it helps you in understanding it.

Who or what are you really angry at?

This is probably the very first question that needs to be put on the table. What provoked your anger? Was it a person, or was it some situation? Sometimes, you might think that this is the reason behind your anger only to realize after a careful assessment, that it was not the reason at all. It is in the nature of human beings to carry unresolved anger with them and then expose them in a completely unrelated situation. This makes you become angry at someone who didn’t do anything at all. So, you need to ask yourself, what is the real reason behind your anger?

Do you want to be angry now?

It is true that anger doesn't come by choice, and you don't really get to choose to be angry at a particular place or time. It just happens. And usually, anger comes to you or everyone at the most inappropriate moments. So, when you feel that you are angry, you need to ask yourself whether you really want to be angry at that place. Because sometimes, it might be your workplace or any other such important place where your anger can negatively affect your image.

Why are you angry?

It has been noticed that anger is often a very thoughtless and instinctive reaction, and that is why I am telling you to ask yourself why you are angry in the first place. Sometimes, people don't really have a clue about what the actual underlying issue is. You simply know that you are angry.

Do the reason behind your anger and the intensity of the emotion match?

This can seem a bit weird now, but it is a very practical question. Suppose someone has parked their car in your usual area and so you had to find another one for yourself. This is not a situation where you will show full-on rage. Instead, it can be called a situation for annoyance. Similarly, it can happen to you in any other situation as well. People get into more trouble,

especially because they are often way too angry than the situation demands them to be. Remember that rage does not have any justification so don't even try to come up with excuses for your behavior. Be honest and tell yourself that your behavior was out of place and wrong.

Step 7 – Figure Out Your Options

There are several ways in which you can give your response, and we have even explored some of them in the previous chapters. But no matter which ways you choose, you need to have multiple options, say at least three to four options. You can jot them down in your journal so that you know that you can react in these ways, and you won't be hurting anyone.

But whichever options you choose, you also need to think about the consequences that each of them will have. So, when you are angry, think about the options you have and then think about what will be the consequences in each case. If you practice this exercise every time you get angry, then you will always know the best way to react to any particular situation. There are always pros and cons to every situation. All you have to do is go through them in your mind so that the decision to react in a particular way becomes easier, and you don't feel any hesitation at all.

Also, if you are someone who often thinks that you had the right to be angry in a particular situation, then you need to change your way of thinking. It is true that sometimes your anger is justified, but it doesn't mean that you automatically have the right to express your anger in whichever way you deem fit.

Step 8 – Reward Yourself For Every Achievement

After following all that you have learned in this book, there will come a time when you are successful in responding in the right way and not reacting. At that

moment, you will feel good about yourself, and you need to reward yourself for that achievement. Self-gratification is so important for moving forward in life. You are making a healthy choice, and so you should celebrate it.

You will often see parents rewarding their children for every good behavior because that is how human beings function. When they are rewarded, they tend to perform the same thing again for getting that reward. Now, the reward doesn't always have to be something materialistic. It can be simply something like giving a pat on your back and appreciating yourself for all the effort. If you are a book lover or have any such special interests, then you can treat yourself to something like that too.

There is another thing that you can do. You can place a jar in your room, and you can put some money into it whenever you do something constructive towards managing your anger. When you see that the jar is filling up, you will get a sense of accomplishment.

Step 9 – Learn to Accept Life for What It Is

Now that you know how to bring your anger under control, you should also know about some things which will help you not get angry in the first place. One such thing is accepting things the way they are. People stress so much on how they want things to be that they often forget their reality. So, you should start with self-acceptance. In this world of social media, people are so engrossed in other people's lives that they are never fully satisfied with their own. Yes, accepting your own life for the way it is can be hard at first. But you need to make yourself understand that not everything you see on a person's feed is the way they have portrayed it to be. There is so much going on in their life that you don't know about. So, don't be so quick to judge that your life is so miserable while others are having the time of their life.

The moment you deny your reality, you are actually losing the potential better future. So, you need to accept things for the way they are. If you want to get to the good stuff in life, you first have to deal with the bad stuff. There is no harm in admitting your mistakes. But at the same time, you should not be too hard on yourself. Treat every mistake as an opportunity to learn new things. Also, you have to own up to the outcomes – both good and bad.

Never let your fears get the better of you. Accept all feedback with an open mind. Also, practice keeping a gratitude journal where you can note down all the things for which you are grateful in life. This will help you look up to the positive side of life instead of focusing on the negatives. You need to let go of all those biases which are holding you back. Your reality is not going to be a bed of roses. It is going to be hard and you will have to struggle, but there will always be light at the end of the tunnel.

Step 10 – Learn to Be Tolerant

Intolerance is what gives birth to anger. But I am not asking you to tolerate any abuse towards you. What I am asking you to do is practice tolerance towards different viewpoints. When you are angry, you will have thoughts that make you think that the other person is wrong and only you are right. You automatically defend any type of thinking that does not match your own. But there are so many different types of human beings on earth, and not everyone thinks alike. That is why you need to develop a certain degree of tolerance.

So, you need to reassure yourself that there is absolutely nothing wrong with two people having different opinions about the same matter. Also, when someone thinks differently, it is neither your duty nor a necessity to justify

your own thoughts or even believe that you are wrong. Stop acting defensively. You can ask the person to elaborate on their views.

You should never personalize each and every conversation you have. When you are talking to someone, and you both differ in your opinions, stick to the issues at hand. Don't go into your individual personalities because that has nothing to do with this. Also, steer clear of any expletives. They will only stunt the scope of productive exchange of ideas and also demean the other person. Avoid any signs that would show the other person that he/she is worthless, for example, rolling your eyes or sighing while they are in the middle of explaining something.

Intolerance can be easily corrected, especially because it is something you have learned. So, you can also replace it by learning tolerance. You need to seek diversity. The moment you do that you will understand that there are so many different things that you don't know about. Try to be adventurous in your life and read new books that will give you exposure to other cultures and expand your knowledge. You can also try to hang around with new people at parties and strike a conversation with them. In this way, you will get to know others and their varying opinions. You can also visit museums if you are into literary stuff. Seeking diversity is not that tough especially in today's age, where you simply have to open Google, and you have all the answers at your fingertips.

ANGER MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

YOU WILL HEAR many people that they want to stop screaming and yelling at others, but how many of them really want to? They know that it is bad for them and also for the people around them, but at the end of the day, they do not do much to manage their anger. So, if you think you are ready to put the energy and effort required in managing your anger, then here are ten techniques that will really be helpful.

#1 – Adjust Your Lifestyle

So, if you are reading this book, that means you have decided to do something about your anger, and you should start by analyzing your daily routine. You will definitely find things that can be tweaked a bit to reduce your anger. When people are trying to find their anger triggers, they often overlook their immediate environment and lifestyle.

Firstly, let us start with environmental factors. Columbia University researchers had found that people usually show a high level of agreeability, openness, extroversion, and emotional stability when they are living in a climate with somewhere around 72 degrees Fahrenheit being their average temperature. They also noticed a decrease in the positive personality traits whenever the temperature showed an increase or decrease towards the extremes. Similarly, if you think about it, then people are more likely to honk their cars on

a hot summer day as compared to a breezy day in spring.

Your food and nutrition also play a role in controlling your anger. It is said that when you have more fruits and vegetables in your diet, you are likely to be in a good mood as compared to those who live on processed food only. Also, people tend to get angrier when they are hungry. This is because your body starts releasing cortisol and adrenaline and thus makes your nervous system feel as if it is threatened. That is how the anger response is triggered. During such times, people become overly sensitive. So, you need to ensure that you have a steady blood glucose level.

Then there comes alcohol, and you need to keep in mind that the reaction to alcohol is different for everyone. There are some people who become very non-reactive to any form of interaction in social surroundings and behave rather lethargically especially when they have alcohol at dinnertime. But there are others who tend to become aggressive. Also, it is like a vicious cycle; when you are angry, it can lead to more drinking because you are finding a respite in it but on the other hand, when you drink, you become angrier, and the physical expression of anger becomes more.

Sleep problems are also one of the primary reasons for an angry personality. General irritability is simply one of the consequences that sleep has on us. Sleep deprivation leads to a lot of conditions like difficulty concentrating or remembering, headaches, depression, and also heart diseases. You may not realize it, but maintaining your natural circadian rhythm is so important for controlling anger. So, you need to take small steps that would help you sleep better, for example –

- Don’t drink caffeine at night or close to bedtime.

- Keep your electronic gadgets away before sleep. The blue light from these gadgets can hamper sleep.
- Make sure you are in a quiet ambiance.
- Try to maintain a regular schedule and sleep at fixed times.
- Never exercise before bedtime as it releases adrenaline and keeps you from sleeping.
- If you are a shift worker, try to avoid consecutive night shifts.

A pleasant environment in your home or even your workplace can affect your mood in great ways. You can play some calming music when you return back home after a stressful day at work. This will help in calming your senses. Make sure your work table is at a place where there is a full-spectrum of light because that automatically helps you deal with problems in a better way. So, no matter what change you are making to your lifestyle, start today, and you are going to see the improvement yourself.

#2 – Avoid Provocations

It is important to choose your battles wisely and sidestep provocations whenever you can. Yes, there are situations in which you have to deal with it at once, but there will also be plenty of situations where you are most likely dealing with a relationship and a situation that is going on for a long time. For example, your neighbor playing really loud music – you don’t have to confront them immediately. An eventual resolution is required but not essential when you are in a state of rage. Avoidance and escape are two completely different things. I am not asking you to escape or run away from situations. I am simply telling you to deal with it at a different time when you will not be angry.

You also have to ask yourself whether or not the problem is worth dealing it. For example, if a salesperson is being really slow, it can be frustrating, but do you really have to confront him/her? It will take up your energy and time, and you will not be able to arrive at a resolution. That same salesperson will repeat the behavior after you have gone out. It will be you who will be in a bad mood for the rest of the day. So, it is better that you simply walk away.

When in anger, people often react impulsively and so they do not really know when a situation requires immediate confrontation. So, if you come across a situation in your life that is potentially angering, you need to ask yourself whether it needs to be addressed right now. When you are dealing with such difficult situations, timing is always something you should think deeply about.

The next thing that you should do is predict your anger triggers as I have taught you previously in this book and then avoid them as much as possible. But avoidance will certainly not bring you any long-term results. It will simply buy you some time so that you can come up with a better strategy to deal with your anger. Also, you need to remind yourself that not all situations require a head-on response. Sometimes, if you try to think a bit creatively, you can come up with ideas that don’t require a face-to-face response for such a situation. But yes, sometimes there will also be situations which cannot or should not be avoided.

In such a case, if you happen to find yourself in the middle of a disagreement, you can choose to walk away. Sometimes, it can be unproductive to continue a discussion, especially if you find your anger levels

rising. It can be even more damaging. So, what you can do is tell the other person that you can sort this out later. If you want to interrupt the cycle of anger, then the most reasonable step to take is to take a timeout.

I am not asking you to just get up and leave because that would be rude, especially when you are expected to be present. So, you need to analyze situations, and if you think that it is going towards the wrong direction which can get you all angry then you need to politely say that you are short on time and so you would be happy to continue the conversation some other time. Also, stop thinking about a problematic situation over and over again. Distract your mind with something you love. Escape and avoidance are not permanent solutions, but they would definitely help you take the first step towards staying out of anger-triggering situations.

#3 – Find Better Solutions to Your Social Problems

As you know that struggles will always be a part of your life no matter what you do, but a part of growth also involves you to take matters into your own hands and find better solutions. I have said this time and again, and I'll say it once more than learning to express your anger constructively can make all the difference. But for that, you need to be willing to try out new approaches in life and not just stick to what you commonly do. The way your life turns out to be is in some ways related to how you react. You have to take lessons from what you did in the past and gain wisdom so that you can come up with better solutions in the future.

One of the major downsides about the emotion of anger is that it tends to suck people in, and people actually get stuck. They forget all their sanity and don't even ask the basic questions like – is it even worthy of being angry upon? So, over time, people usually have their own particular way of dealing with problems, and whenever they face difficulties, they are consistent

with using the same strategy. The pattern with which they react somehow merges with their personality and becomes one. According to psychological research, it is said that people usually have one positive approach for every two negative approaches in life.

So, you need to remove all the doubts that you have and believe in yourself when it comes to your problem-solving skills. You need to be optimistic and have patience. Your anger should not rule the decisions you make. Firstly, start with identifying the problem at hand. You might be having multiple problems at a time. In that case, deal with them one-by-one. Once you have identified what your problem is, it is now your duty to brainstorm some potential solutions. At first, you might even think of solutions that can make matters worse. If that is the case happening with you, it is time that you start brainstorming even more persistently, and eventually, you will come up with better solutions. Also, generate a range of alternative solutions too.

After that, note down all the short-term outcomes that are possibly going to come your way. These are usually the responses that others are going to give. Sometimes, short-term outcomes may not be as clear as you imagine them to be. In that case, you can always make a well-informed and educated guess about what can happen with your response. Your aim should be to construct such a response which has the maximum chance to occur.

Then, it is time to figure out the long-term outcomes. These outcomes occur over days, weeks, months, or even years. For example, if you are angry at your neighbor and end up vandalizing their fence when they are not at home, it might give you some satisfaction at that moment, but in the long-term, it will put you in a problem with the law. Also, be realistic when you are guessing all these things. All of this will help you in figuring out the best course

of action. When you follow all these steps, you won't end up choosing a course of action that you cannot actually implement because of the lack of skills.

#4 – Change Your Perspective About Life

You can only try your best to remain calm in the face of challenges and problems, but that doesn't mean that your life will be free of them. Whether it is unfair treatment at work or school, sudden misfortune in finance or false gossips doing rounds, there will always be something or the other coming up. It is actually your thinking that gives birth to anger in the first place. Your way of thinking and your observation of a particular situation is what makes you angry. This is also known as self-defeating behavior, and it has to be dealt with before it causes way too harm.

So, if you want to change your perspective about life, you first have to become skeptical. Human beings are often unaware of all those thoughts going on in their head. So, sit calmly for about a minute and simply observe the thoughts that come and go in your mind. You will notice that you are, in fact, constantly predicting and judging your experience. There will be some thoughts that are quite easy to identify but there will also be those thoughts that are operating at a level that is below your consciousness, and these thoughts are hard to catch. But if you are willing to know your inner self, then you have to try and get in contact with those thoughts that are present in your subconscious.

Another thing that you have to work on is your habit of making assumptions. Human beings often tend to believe what they assume to be the truth rather than what is the truth. Do you believe that you are interpreting the events in your life correctly at all times? If so, then you need to get out of that way of thinking because it is not possible for any person to predict the rightful thing at all times. Instead, try to know what the version of the truth is for those around you, and then you will get exposure to a greater number of

perspectives.

Next, you need to identify the thoughts that are going on inside your head while you are angry. There will be some thoughts that are completely irrational, and your duty is to find positive and rational alternatives to them. One such common toxic thought pattern is demandingness, and if you identify that in yourself, then you need to replace it with being more flexible. If you use words like ‘has to’ and ‘must,’ then you need to work on your vocabulary and avoid the usage of these words. It is one thing to suggest but another thing to insist on.

If you have the habit of being too hard on yourself even when you make the smallest mistakes, then it is time that you start loving yourself. You have to accept your fallibility and know that one small mistake does not automatically make you a bad person.

Also, if you want to make a great impact on your thinking patterns and adopt a new perspective, then you will have to work on it on a daily basis. If there are multiple thinking patterns that need correction, you can start with one and then work your way up to the others. Once you are confident about changing one single thought pattern, you can move on to the others. You need to resist the urge to draw negative conclusions from the simplest of matters. Always consider the alternatives before you jump to any extreme thought.

#5 – Let It Go

Acceptance and commitment are two things that will really help you in your journey of anger control. Acceptance is when you are aware of your thoughts, and you know that you are angry but you decide not to give in to them. Thoughts are usually automatic and they are triggered by some situation. It is very easy to

give a safe passage to your thoughts after which they start controlling your angry reactions. But this can also lead to vengeful behavior and continued rumination. So, you need to think of the alternate option that you have in hand and that is to realize that your thoughts are neither real nor fake. They are simply your thoughts, and you can choose to move past them.

Don't let the thoughts in your head bully you into doing something that you know you will regret later. Start developing a curious and open attitude towards your thoughts and be an observer. The next thing that you have to do weigh your priorities, and you will often find that your angry thoughts and the urge to act upon them are not as important as something else, like the next big project. So, never undermine your values because, at the end of the day, your values will guide you home and not let you do anything that doesn't go with your character.

So, the next time you are angry, you need to pick a response that would match your character and your values and not what your thoughts want you to do. There are so many autopilot reactions in your body, and physical manifestation of anger is just one of them. So, your duty is to move away from them. Slow down and think about what you are going to do. Is it something of the highest priority for you? Your thoughts are not what defines your reality but your actions do so be careful about how you react.

When someone calls you out with nasty words, you need to keep your calm. Words cannot do anything to you if you don't let them. They are simply words. You need to remind yourself that there are two choices open in front of you. You can take those words to heart and display a strong reaction or maybe a physical assault in response to those words. Or, you can let your thoughts flow through your mind because, at the end of the day,

those are just words. If someone calls you a bad name, you do not become a bad person. Remember that, always.

Suppose your child is making mischief. What do you do? Do you yell at him or make him understand nicely? If you have anger issues, you'll probably end up yelling but at that moment, you have to remind yourself of your core values. You are a parent and so obviously, you would want to be someone who is wise. So, your core values should be about being caring and supportive. If your child doesn't want to do Maths because he wants to draw pictures, you need to let him do that. You can ask him to complete his Maths homework later.

#6 – Learn to Forgive

Forgiveness is very important if you want to move on and handle your anger in a better way. If you do not learn to forgive, then you will end up replaying the same events over and over again in your head and keep ruminating on it. You will never forget it and hold on to the grudge. When you are dealing with misfortune in life or even unfairness, having an unforgiving response is not what is going to help you through it. Instead, having such a response leaves you powerless as you keep on playing the role of the victim, and the memory of how you were hurt gets jogged up. This further prevents you from having any happy moments in your future. Also, since it keeps fueling your anger, you might develop a self-defeating attitude that will ultimately stunt personal growth.

Also, when angry people have an unforgiving attitude, they also seek revenge. Now, revenge is not always what you think of it to be. It is not always fantasy as sometimes, revenge is present in the most commonplace of things like deliberately making it difficult for someone to achieve something. Or, sometimes revenge is about gossiping and spreading rumors about a person you don't like.

It is true that you might not develop a sense of forgiveness all of a sudden. It is not a switch that can be turned on. You need to practice it over time in order to make sure that it takes effect. It involves a major shift in your mentality too. You are trying to understand why a person did what he/she did even though you are hurt. But once you learn to forgive, you will go into a much calmer state of mind, and you will also find yourself making better decisions.

But in order to learn how you can forgive someone, you first have to uncover the anger that is lying within you. You need to be fully aware of the trigger for your anger. You have to discuss the reasons behind your anger with someone you trust. The moment you do that, it will become much easier for you to uncover it and reevaluate the deeper feelings and emotions lying underneath it. Now, you need to decide from the bottom of your heart that you really want to forgive. You need to remember that although sometimes anger can be the legitimate response to what happened, it doesn't really help you in any way when it comes to improving your relationship with others. No matter how many reasons you put up to justify your anger, you will realize that in the long-term, it doesn't really matter.

Sometimes, the notion of forgiveness is so unacceptable and foreign to people that they reject it right away. When you forgive someone, you are actually releasing the anger from your body and you are no longer allowing the anger to control you. The anger then becomes a part of your life and not something that defines it. But if you think that why should you forgive someone who did injustice to you, remember that forgiveness does not mean you are excusing someone's wrongdoing or accepting mistreatment. It does not have anything to do with passive acceptance either. But people often mix up the meaning of forgiveness with all these terms and so I just wanted to make sure

that you don’t make the same mistake as well.

What forgiveness truly means is that you are working towards changing your behavioral, emotional, and mental response to everything in life. When you are able to forgive the offender, you are actually able to see everything from a different perspective.

#7 – Use Meditation, Mindfulness, and Relaxation Practices to Calm Yourself

Telling someone to calm down is way easier, but when you have to do it yourself, you know how difficult it actually is. Your inner self-talk can really prevent your mind from calming down when it should. So, meditation actually helps in reducing your inner self-talk and shows you the path to peace. Now, in order to meditate, you need to put all your focus on something. It can be your own breath or even the flame of a candle. The main of the exercise is to allow your thoughts to float through your mind and you will just be a mere observer. Meditation allows you to see your own thoughts from a third-person perspective so that you can understand where they are going wrong. When you know where the problem lies, you can make the changes accordingly.

On the other hand, mindfulness is a practice that helps you in improving your awareness of the world. In this era, everyone is always working and multitasking. So, mindfulness helps you to bring back your focus and be aware of what you are doing in life. When people are not living in the moment, they miss out on a lot of things in life. They don’t really enjoy the small little things shared with family and friends, and they don’t know how it feels when they receive subtle compliments. So, strike a conversation with your loved one today and listen very carefully to what they are saying. Don’t be judgmental about anything. Just keep an open mind and also stop your urge to respond. When you master the art of mindfulness, you will find yourself developing better

connections and communications with those who are of the utmost importance in your life.

Whether you are practicing mindfulness or meditation, make sure that you do not wear any form of tight clothing during the process; otherwise, it will prevent you from fully concentrating. Now, sit down in a quiet place and breathe. Be aware of the rhythmic pattern of your breathing and concentrate on it. Breathe naturally. Many people resort to yoga and it has the same benefits too. The body positioning that you have to do in yoga actually takes your mind away from the thinking process and you can go into a totally relaxed state.

Another way in which you can achieve relaxation is with the help of simple deep breathing, which is also called diaphragmatic breathing. If you notice carefully, then you will know that when you get angry, your breathing tends to get shallow and rapid. But this breathing practice can help you counteract that response. But you need to breathe from your diaphragm. Keep a book on your abdomen and then lie down on the ground. If you are successful in breathing through your abdomen, the book will make up and down movements. Practice it for a few days and you will get it right.

You can also do some form of prayer or chanting. It has been seen in various forms of research that repetitive chanting of a prayer evokes relaxation in human beings. It helps a lot in reducing bodily arousal. There is rhythmic and deep breathing associated with any form of chanting that requires you to perform muscular or verbal repetition.

If none of the above-mentioned procedures work for you, then you can simply go out for a walk in nature. Or, you can get a massage or a hot bath because water has therapeutic properties too. For massage, if you don't like a stranger touching your body, then you can get those electric massage devices and get it done at home by yourself.

#8 – Learn Exposure Techniques

Now, before I move on to the details of exposure techniques and how you can learn them, there are certain situations in which I would advise you not to go for these techniques, and they are as follows –

- *You do not have the motivation or commitment required to change the way you respond to anger*. In such cases, the exposure technique can actually backfire.
- *When you know that you are into substance misuse*. If you are regularly drinking alcohol or doing drugs, then it can be a problem to manage your emotions. When you are at a certain level of intoxication, your behavior and emotions become unpredictable, and in those cases, applying exposure techniques cannot help you.
- *When you are agitated or depressed.* Some people go into serious depression while they are suffering from anger issues, and if you happen to be one of them, exposure techniques might not be a good idea for you. You can try at basic levels but you need to discontinue the moment you feel that these techniques are making you feel worse.
- *If you are at a stage where you cannot control your urges of showing aggressive behavior.* In such a case, implementing exposure techniques might actually lead to someone getting hurt. But in case you want to still try it out, make sure you do so under the supervision of someone responsible.

Now, moving on top how exposure techniques actually work –

- If you don't actually face the triggers that cause you to be angry, then all those meditation and other techniques wouldn't really be helpful that much when it comes to a real-life situation. So, exposure techniques involved learning new skills, but instead of an imaginary context, it urges you to do so in a realistic context.
- Then, the next step is to practice habituation where you learn to get habituated to your triggers. It is very commonly seen in the case of fear triggers. For example, if you saw a horror movie and you found it scary, it probably wouldn't be that much scary if you watch it for like 10 times. The same theory applies to your anger triggers as well.
- After that, you will learn how you can break your anger-reinforcement patterns. You might find yourself saying that you had nothing to do in a situation because your anger took over you. This is because, over time, you have become reinforced to act in that particular way and your actions somewhat become automatic.
- Lastly, you will be working with an anger-triggering situation. Firstly, you have to list some situations where you usually get angry and then rate them on the basis of the intensity of your anger. Then, select one situation to start the exercise with (preferably the one which you had rated somewhere in the middle). First, you need to practice by getting exposure to it in your imagination. Then, move on to the verbal side of it. Get a partner and ask him/her to say things to you that some other person would have told you in that anger-triggering situation. Then, you have to implement the relaxation techniques in response to those verbal barbs. The final step is to practice the same in real life, and you have to intentionally place yourself in a situation like that. The important part is that you should control your urge to react to your triggers. Now, gauge your success and see whether you have improved from before. Write

down your emotions in a journal and if you think you have achieved success with this particular situation, then you can move on to a more difficult situation.

#9 – Work On Your Interpersonal and Social Skills

Since anger usually evolves from your interaction with others, it is important to work upon your interpersonal and social skills, and they will help you to deal with people in a more effective manner. People usually tend to focus only on words when they are trying to improve their communication. But are words the only thing that matters? Well, no, because your body language also communicated a lot. If there is an openness and sense of confidence in your body language, then communicating your message to the other person will become way easier.

The basic elements of your body language are interpersonal space, posture, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact. The proper use of these five elements is important to build the foundation for effective communication.

Interpersonal space is referred to as the distance you maintain with the other person while talking. It varies from person to person and also depends on the occasion. The cultural norms of the person you are talking to also come into play. Next, we come to the discussion on posture. You should not have rounded shoulders and, at the same time, don’t be too rigid. Gestures are equally important too. It is usually thought that when a person keeps their hands on their hips or in their pockets, that means they are not much interested in speaking. Also, when you are in the middle of a conversation with someone, avoid things like closed arms or tapping your fingers on the table because that gives off a vibe that you are either impatient or annoyed with the subject of discussion.

Whether you are truly interested in the talk or not can be easily communicated through your facial expressions and so they are of utmost importance. You might be affecting your chance at a good communication if you frown, smirk, or maybe purse your lips. Effective eye contact is a skill, and you have to master it. You need to be aware of when you need to make strong eye contact and when you need to avoid it. Sometimes, too much eye contact can be insulting or even intimidating. On the other hand, not maintaining eye contact can also mean that you are not interested.

The next skill that you have to learn is to be a better listener. People will automatically start liking you when they feel that you are a good listener. They will trust you way more than the others. Being a good listener means that you let the other person talk more and also engage with what they have just told you. If you possess the quality of empathy, then it is a bonus point because then you will be able to stand in that person's shoes and feel exactly what he/she is trying to communicate to you. But avoid parroting what the other person has just said. You need to form your own views and opinions.

Lastly, always maintain a positive and upbeat attitude during the conversation. No one likes to converse with someone who is always negative and gloomy. So, judge the ratio of your negative comments to positive comments in your usual conversations, and if you think you give more negative comments than positive, then you should work a bit on changing that. Give compliments. You automatically strengthen your relationship with others when you start complimenting then or give them positive feedback. Over time, the practice will also help you develop an outgoing attitude in general. Also, learn to accept compliments from others. Don't dismiss the recognition you just received. Another important skill to learn is how you can handle the negative feedbacks that come your way. It can be a complicated scenario but you need to be positive and upbeat about it.

#10 – Search For a Productive Way to Express Your Anger

This strategy will be very useful for you in situations where you are feeling angry, and you want to release anger but you don't want to hurt those around you. Do you think that anger expression is all about letting others know about your opinions and where you stand? Well, have you thought about it this way that not everyone would love to hear your strong reactions and may even consider you disrespectful? But if you don't say anything and remain silent, it will keep accumulating as resentment and is not good for your health.

So, you need to learn how to react assertively, that is, you need to solve your conflicts by looking for solutions that are mutually acceptable. This is done by the implementation of the right behavior and words. But assertiveness alone cannot always help you out. For example, think about your short-term goals. Here, you have to work with the other person to resolve your issues. But the problem usually is that rejection, unfair treatment, and conflict from the past stands in your way. This is because you haven't identified the emotional baggage that you are carrying around. Yes, it would also depend on how cooperative the other person is.

But when it comes to your long-term goals, there you have to come with an automatic response to your problems. Now, you might be thinking, what does it mean to behave assertively? Well, it is quite simple. It means that you are ready to be honest and direct about your feelings in an appropriate manner. So, basically, there are three steps to it which are as follows –

- You have to be clear about how you feel about the other person and give them a clear message. But make sure you are not forceful in that process; otherwise, the chances are that person will never talk to you

again.

- Then, there must be something specific that you are irritated about, or that seems problematic to you. You have to identify what it is.
- Finally, tell the person what exactly you would prefer instead.

If you are just a beginner at this, then know that you have to use a lot of 'feeling' statements. You need to speak the truth about your feelings and not what you are thinking. Don't overdo it because that might portray you as self-centered. You need to practice at home talking in ways that involve saying your preferences and desires. Don't be excessive or general but rather specific about things. Now, when you are trying to adopt an assertive lifestyle, you are actually communicating with people, and for that, you have to implement the skills that you learned in Strategy number 9. Also, listen to what the other person has to say because it is not all about you. The main motto of being assertive is not to get things your way but rather to come to a solution that is mutually beneficial. So, there must be a balance between what the other person wants and what you want and only then will it work.

It is very common for human beings to neglect their own happiness, and if you don't keep yourself happy, how are you going to keep others happy? So, forgo your verbally aggressive responses, and practice assertiveness.

Once you have mastered all these strategies, you will realize that you have finally learned to let go of your anger and also engage in open communications without hesitation.

MANAGING ANGER IN AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP

AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP is not always bright and sunny, and there are so many people who suffer the worst because of problems in their intimate relationship. It can be with your child, close friend, sibling, parent or spouse. In this chapter, you will learn all about anger management and how it is done in the case of intimate relationships. You will learn how not to be contemptuous while communicating and the way in which you can set healthy boundaries.

When we speak about domestic violence, the first picture that comes to everyone's mind is a violent husband beating up his wife. But domestic violence is not limited to that single relationship. It can be your father who has mistreated you your entire life or the same thing with your sibling. When you love someone, and yet that person behaves in a violent manner, then such relationships are the most difficult ones to deal with.

Violence Among Intimate Partners

There is a term that is used to describe such a relationship, and it is called IPV or Intimate Partner Violence. It is when you are being emotionally, physically, or sexually hurt by the person you love or dating. The people who have become victims of IPV also have a tendency to develop other behaviors that are self-destructive in nature, for example, the use of cocaine, suicide, unplanned pregnancy, binge drinking, smoking, or even unsafe sex.

Among all other relationships, marriage is the most intimate one. But the core values on which it is based are mutual respect and trust. And you will find several marriages that are imperfect. Even though the couple might have started their journey as newlyweds who were so in love, but they can end up being stuck in an angry marriage. But if you are not sure whether you can call yourself as an angry couple or not, you can ask these questions to yourself –

- Do you quarrel or get angry with your spouse at least once a day?
- How would you rate your quarrels and their intensity on a scale of one to ten where one is mildest, and ten is the strongest?
- Have you or your spouse ever got violent and pushed or shoved each other?
- Do you often hurl bad words and inflammatory language at each other?

If the answer to all or some of these questions were yes, then it is safe to say that you both are definitely an angry couple.

Anger in Parent-Child Relationships

There is a lot of scope for anger in the case of a parent-child relationship, and it is mainly because you are responsible for grooming a child and it can happen that your child is mischievous and so/he is not listening to you. Although some amount of anger is usually normal, sometimes the anger can get out of control or last way too long than expected. But you must also know that it is not always the parents who are too angry and cause tension in the relationship. Sometimes, parents are themselves the victims of their child's anger.

Anger Among Siblings

There is always some power struggle or jealousy going on among all siblings. In today's world, people are very concerned about incidences regarding bullying, and it often leads to things like depression and low-esteem. But there is a start to everything and so does bullying.

Steps to Deal With Anger in Intimate Relationships

The most difficult think about dealing with anger in intimate relationships is the fact that all those people that are present around you are those for whom you care the most. There can actually be two situations. In one of them, it is you who is angry, and in the other one, you are the victim. But the incentive here is that the anger involved is with a person you love and so you know that the precious relationship is at stake, which means, you will put the effort necessary to manage the situation. In this section, you will learn all about anger in intimate relationships and also the things you can do to take control of the situation.

You fear that you'll become the person you hate

It is often seen that people undergo a change when they are involved in an intimate relationship. The change is that you end up being the person you hate so much. In the beginning, it might be the other person who was displaying excessive anger, but over time, you might get the feeling that you have to level the playing field, and so you end up becoming the person you hate. Of course, it will not happen in a day and will take a lot of time.

Remember that two wrongs never make it right

You have to remember that one angry person is already a big problem to deal with in an intimate relationship. So, if it is the other person who has anger issues, you have to learn to keep your calm. When both of you are angry, things can easily get out of control.

Learn to set boundaries

Boundaries are very much essential to main healthy relationships. When you set boundaries, you are actually setting limits that will tell you when you have gone too far. Some of the things that you can do to set boundaries are as follows –

- If you think that your anger levels have gone too high for you to control or that it has become too intense, then it's time that you walk away. Remember how I asked you to measure your anger on a scale of 10? You have to do that every time you are angry, and if you rate yourself a 7 or higher, then that means it is time for you to take a break and walk away.
- You have to make yourself understand that committing acts of physical violence never solves anything.
- You should be setting a limit on the amount of anger you should express. When you think that you are taking your anger expression to the next level onto rage, that is when you have to stop.
- You need to make your stand very clear when it comes to a matter of respect. You need to demand equal respect in all intimate relationships. So, if you decide to restrain yourself from getting angry, your partner should do the same, and if they don't, you should ask them to.

- No matter what you are trying to say to your partner, your tone is very important. If you raise your volume, the message automatically gets lost.
- It is okay to let the person you love have the last word.

The world we live in follows reciprocity and believes in the tit-for-tat mantra. You have to forego that if you value your relationships more. Domestic violence always begins with this kind of thinking and so it is better that you nip it in the bud.

Now, the above-mentioned things were for when you were the angry person, but if you are on the receiving end, then here are some tips for you.

Remove the mental traps

Mental traps are what get you in a relationship that involves a love-hate thing. You have such strong beliefs on anger and love that you are blind to the toxicity you are stuck in. A relationship should be safe and intimate. If you want to break free from the mental traps, then you need to practice cognitive restructuring. In simpler words, you need to rewire your brain regarding its concepts of love and anger. Here are some beliefs that you need to rewire –

- *You can make someone else's anger go away* – This is one of the most toxic beliefs out there. You cannot expect your loving relationship to

make your partner's anger go away in an instant. Being less angry is your partner's responsibility, and unless and until they take any necessary steps, no one can help them.

- *Love is forever, whereas anger is fleeting* – A large number of intimate relationships that have domestic violence are still going on because the victim believes in this fake mantra – love is forever. You need to understand that anger is quite a chronic condition and it is anything but fleeting. And my dear, love is not meant to be something where you are beaten up every day!
- *He'll change if he loves you* – This is another myth that is quite prevalent among couples that the other person can change is he/she loves you enough. Yes, love definitely acts as an intensive for a person to undergo anger management therapy, but love by itself is not enough to keep the person motivated. The person's anger should not be some kind of test to measure his love or vice-versa.
- *All you need is love* – It might sound quite good in songs and poetry, but in real life, you need a lot more than just love to keep going. Your career, your health, and even your financial conditions can matter more than your love.
- *Anger is just another form of caring* – Absolutely not! Don't let anyone tell you that their anger is just another way of showing you that they care. No. That is utter rubbish. The only thing angry people care about is themselves, their ego, and their own good. They are angry simply because they wanted to let off steam and not because they care.

Don't be the facilitator to your partner's anger

Sometimes, in intimate relationships, when you cannot do anything to help curb

your partner's anger, knowingly or unknowingly, you end up making matters worse by facilitating their anger with your behavior. If someone tells you not to speak or not to say a word right now because they are angry, it is okay for you to not speak and let them calm down.

Another thing that you shouldn't do is apologizing for their anger. You shouldn't be saying things like, 'I'm sorry that I make you angry at all times.' No, it is not your fault. Instead, you can ask them whether they want to discuss what they are angry about.

Try to get a life of your own and don't depend on your partner for everything. Your partner's anger should not be your life's centerpiece. You have your own dreams and aspirations and even your own friend circle. Don't let all of that go to waste. Follow the interests that you have, or you can even go on a solo trip to discover yourself.

Stop being the excuse of your partner's anger. In a relationship when the other person is having trouble managing their anger, they should be able to identify their problems and not shove it to you. If they tell someone that it was you because of whom they were angry, you need to stop them and tell them that it was not you. If your partner cannot be responsible for owning up to their actions, they will not see progress.

Also, at times, especially when your partner gets angry in front of others, they have to save their face, and so you end up making excuses for them. Never do that. You should not be saving their face for the wrong things they have done.

Refuse to be the victim

This is probably the most important lesson for every intimate relationship that is facing anger-related issues. Don’t give in to hopelessness. You can go to your good friend who is supportive and talk to him/her about your problems. Also, take measures that ensure your safety. If your partner is having serious anger issues, then it is your first priority to keep yourself safe.

Always be assertive. You should be aware of the fact that you need to be treated respectfully no matter what. You shouldn’t be someone else’s punching bag, and so you should always stand up for yourself. You need to be honest in these kinds of situations. If you don’t accept it to yourself that you are indeed facing a problem in your relationship, a solution will never come. So, you need to admit that you are stuck. If you hope to solve a problem, then you also have to acknowledge its presence.

MAINTENANCE PLAN

NOW THAT YOU have learned about how you can manage your anger, it is time for you to have your own maintenance plan to ensure that the problem does not come back. The major reason for anger issues is stress. People either face the wrong types of stress or are too much stressed. Different people have different ways of showing their stress. Some people keep to themselves (although this is harmful over the long-term), and then there are some who lash out immediately. So, if you have finally got a hold over your anger issues, you should make sure that they don't return by managing the stress levels of your life.

Stay Away From Carriers of Stress

This is the first step towards managing the stress in your life. Stress carriers can be anything and they usually differ from one person to the other. It can be a thing or even a person. You have to limit your exposure to these stress carriers as much as you can. You have to make yourself understand that this stress can be quite contagious for you because when stress accumulates over time, it easily gets converted to anger, which is something you don't want.

So, start by identifying the carriers of stress in your life. Stressors are present in the day-to-day life of every individual like deadlines, heavy traffic in the morning, irritating and nagging people, misplacing important things, and so on. These were some minor stressors but there can be major

stressors too like losing your job, your spouse filing for a divorce, experiencing the death of a close relative or friend, going bankrupt and so on.

Now, once you have identified the stressors, it is time you determine which ones are toxic and which are not. There is a fixed carrying capacity of stress that every person has, and it is not fixed for everyone. No matter how resilient you are, there will be a time in your life too, when you will feel that the burdens are becoming too much for you to bear. For some people, stress is something that they are addicted to because they love the adrenaline rush that comes with it. But if you are indeed a stress addict, you need to work on that.

Anyways, you should also know about cumulative stress. As the term suggests, it is a type of stress that doesn't happen in a day but rather cumulates over time. They keep adding to your carrying capacity until one day, you cannot take them anymore, and you explode. Then there is chronic stress which is something like back pain and it will be there every day you wake up. Some examples are obesity, poverty, domestic violence, and so on.

One of the important things that you can do in order to combat stress is to avoid burnouts at all costs. When you expose yourself to too much work or emotional strain, there will come a time inevitably when you cannot keep doing it anymore, and that is when you have burnout. Some of the symptoms of burnout are insomnia, chronic levels of fatigue, hopelessness, headaches, cynicism, agitation, no passion for work, confusion, and so on. The irony is that the people who do their work more passionately are usually the ones facing burnout at some point in their life or the other because of their tendency to become a workaholic. In such cases, you simply need to back off a bit and then take a few days off. You can also go for a vacation to refresh your mood.

Become a Responsible Consumer

This is another of the very important steps that you need to take. Your internal environment matters a lot when it comes to managing your anger, and in order to maintain that environment, you need to keep a check on the things that you are consuming. Some common chemical substances that people take can have adverse effects if not taken within control and these are – alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. Yes, they are not illegal but that doesn't mean you will have them in endless amounts. They are not at all healthy.

Cigarettes are legal, but you all know how they can cause untimely death and can easily become an addiction. Alcohol is legal too but when consumed in excess amounts, it causes incidents like car accidents, domestic violence or even simple anger outbursts. Then, there is caffeine – which is the most commonly used one as people think it won't harm you, but it does. It hampers your sleep cycle when taken at the wrong time and it also raises your blood pressure. Also, all of these have the potential to lower your arousal levels for anger. Now, if you are someone who has just been able to manage their anger issues, I would definitely suggest that you become a responsible consumer and stop consuming these chemicals at once.

If you don't know how these chemicals affect you, read on to find out –

- Nicotine and caffeine both have the ability to stimulate your CNS or central nervous system. This means that your body has become easy prey to the provocations present in your environment. The moment your CNS is ramped up, you will find it more difficult than ever to calm down. And if you come across any anger trigger, then things can become harder still.

- Your perceptions and sense of judgment can get clouded by your consumption of alcohol. That is why when a person is in a stage of intoxication, they often misread the intentions of others in their vicinity, and this can lead to angry outbursts that result from mere misunderstanding. You will notice how you are more likely to punch someone in the face when you are sloshed.
- Your levels of irritability rise when you do not get enough sleep, and your sleep patterns are hampered when you consume alcohol and caffeine. Yes, coffee can definitely help you stay up on all those nights when you have to submit a project on time but it is having a detrimental effect on your body. Also, when you drink too much alcohol at a party, you often feel tired the next morning and this can lead to general irritation or even an agitated state of mind. For a person who has just recovered from anger issues, this can be quite harmful.
- Your mood is greatly affected by the consumption of alcohol. It can lead to sadness and depression.

So, what is the solution if you cannot cut them off completely? Well, you need to understand how much consumption is too much. You can have them in moderation if you cannot stop completely. It is said that having 250 milligrams of caffeine daily is moderate and will not have any adverse effects on your body. But you have to keep in mind that the coffee will remain in your body for about seven hours and so you should not consume it close to bedtime. Research suggests that consuming three ounces of alcohol daily will not deteriorate your health. Also, you should avoid drinking along because that usually makes people drink more. Make sure you have already eaten your food before drinking. This is because the food will absorb a lot of alcohol and then prevent it from wreaking havoc on your CNS.

But when it comes to smoking, I would definitely urge you to stop it co Since you get pleasure from smoking cigarettes, you can start by trying to find a hobby that can be the substitute, for example, journaling. It can be anything for you. It can be watching movies or even listening to songs or hitting the gym. You need to develop an inner mantra that will talk you out of the urge to smoke.

Get Good Sleep

Getting the right amount of sleep every day is so important for maintaining your balanced state of mind. Have you ever seen a baby that has not got enough sleep? It has a cranky attitude and keeps crying and shouting. Well, the same goes for adults who do not get enough sleep daily. Maintaining proper sleep hygiene is such an important part of anger management, and people often to overlook it. There are so many restorative benefits of sleep that you cannot overlook. It not only helps you psychologically but also physically. When you get enough sleep, you become ready for the next day and you are all geared up to tackle whatever comes your way. Your energy reserves are restored and you are in a good mood right from the morning.

So, first, you need to know how much sleep you actually need. Well, it actually depends on the person and varies with the activities they perform in a day. It also depends on the age of the person. For older adults, the requirement of nighttime sleep is less because of the day time naps they take. For a baby of one to twenty-four months, the average sleep required is 16 to 18 hours. For a kid of two to eleven years, it is 10 to 11 hours of sleep. For anyone aged between twelve and twenty, the sleep required is 8 to 9 hours. Lastly, for adults aged twenty-one and older, the sleep required is seven to eight hours.

ut, there is another factor which is even more important than the number of hours you are sleeping, and that is – the quality of your sleep. You might not

Balways have a good sleep even if you laid down for eight hours in your bed. And when you do not have a good quality sleep, that is when you feel groggy and tired after waking up. If you are able to maintain proper levels of sleep hygiene, the quality of sleep will also improve over a period of time. Some of the things that you can do are –

- Your day time naps should be of short durations and not something like two hours or more
- You should not exercise just before going to bed
- You should promise yourself not to be stressed or angry when you go to bed
- You should not consume caffeine, tobacco, or alcohol before bedtime
- Don't change your sleeping hours every day. Maintain fixed times.

Apart from the above-mentioned things, you need to maintain a proper sleep environment. Use window shades and curtains so that light from outside doesn't come in while you are sleeping. You can also take a nice hot bath before sleeping, and you can see the change for yourself. Keep the temperature in your room at optimum levels. Also, try to get a good mattress because that is going to be a lifetime investment for you. If you sleep with someone who has a snoring problem, then use earplugs. Also, avoid having late-night phone conversations, watching TV, eating late or studying till late hours before an exam. Your bedroom should not be used as a multi-purpose room.

If you follow all of the steps mentioned in this chapter, then maintaining your balanced state of mind should be easier. Anger management is an ongoing strategy, and following the steps throughout your life is essential to prevent the triggers from affecting you.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for making it through to the end of *Anger Management: Workbook for Adults*, let's hope it was informative and able to provide you with all of the tools you need to achieve your goals whatever they may be.

The next step is to understand that anger management does not happen in a day. It is more like a journey. There will be ups and downs, but you cannot choose to give up. If you want all these steps to be effective, then you have to keep practicing every day because anger is a habit that has been inculcated into you over the years. In order to break free from the clutches of anger, you need to be persistent and motivated to do so.

You might even face roadblocks along the way in the form of setbacks, but you need to understand that they are completely normal. What is important is how you handle those setbacks. You shouldn't give up all your efforts just because you lost control once. Start over and the next time, you will be stronger than you were before.

Take a deep breath and figure out how you are going to handle things constructively. Engage in positive self-talk and be rational about everything. Don't let anyone tell you that you are not capable of change because you are. Anger is only a part of life, and so you should not let it define you.

Finally, if you found this book useful in any way, a review on Amazon is always appreciated!

SELF-DISCIPLINE HANDBOOK

Self-Discipline in 10 days

KATHRIN DESHOTELS

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INTRODUCTION

Did you know that self-discipline is one of the most useful skills a person can have? It is a skill that is used in every area of a person's life. Although many people understand the importance of this skill, not many take the time and effort to improve their discipline. A common myth when it comes to self-discipline is that those who practice it are always living in a strict and limited lifestyle. On the contrary, self-discipline merely means having better self-control and increasing one's inner strength to control themselves, their behavior and reactions.

One of the main traits of self-discipline is the ability to deny instant gratification and pleasure in return for greater gain which requires a person to put in effort and time to achieve. Most people know that self-discipline is one of the most crucial components when it comes to success. Here is how self-discipline expresses itself:

- Self-control
- Perseverance
- The ability to not give up even when faced with obstacles and failure
- The ability to resist temptations or distractions
- The ability to keep trying until you accomplish the goal you've set

You're probably wondering, what can I achieve through strengthening self-

discipline? You can achieve most of the goals you set for yourself as long as your mindset is there. Throughout this book, we will be learning about different ways that you can achieve self-discipline through. Popular techniques include visualization and meditation. These are techniques that people use to envision themselves achieving the goals and success that they want in life. By being able to picture what they want, people have achieved goals that they never thought were possible simply by altering their mindset and overcoming bad habits. People such as athletes and entrepreneurs all rely heavily on their self-discipline ability in order to achieve the success that they want. Those that are in industries where their success highly relies on their ability to perform tend to naturally showcase better self-discipline behavior due to having more practice from exercising it every day. For example, people in sales tend to showcase more self-discipline than other occupations because of the targets that they have to meet. People within the sales industry are normally hired due to their motivation to make money. Due to this motivation, they likely have a goal or target in mind for how much they want to sell within a certain time frame. By having a defined goal, they are driven to do everything they can to reach it and is constantly overcoming obstacles like instant gratification and laziness. If a person is constantly overcoming those obstacles every day, those obstacles slowly start to feel like they aren't there anymore. That's when self-discipline becomes a habit. This is the goal that I want us to get to throughout this book.

No matter how young or old, how inexperienced or experienced, or how what education level you have, this book will be able to help you strengthen your self-discipline so you can utilize it in your daily life to achieve the things you want to achieve. The things you want to achieve don't have to be huge goals like building your own billion dollar company, but you can use it to start achieving some little things that you want in life. This can be quitting smoking, eating healthier, or completing a personal project that's important to you. Regardless of who you are and what you want to accomplish, the basis of self-discipline is the same for everyone. This book will help you understand everything you need to know about self-discipline, the benefits, and challenges that it brings, and I will

provide you with a step by step process on how you can achieve self-discipline along with some practical exercises that you can use to strengthen it.

THE ART OF DISCIPLINE

UNDERSTANDING what the psychology behind self-discipline is is extremely crucial as it will help you learn what the driving factors are behind it. One of the main factors that drive self-discipline is willpower. A common belief in people is that they think they can change their lives for the better if they simply could just have more willpower. If people had more willpower, everyone would be able to save responsibly for retirement, exercise regularly, stop procrastinating, avoid alcohol and drugs, and achieve all kinds of their noble goals. One survey that studied all Americans and their annual stress found that the majority of the participants reported that lacking willpower is the number one reason for not following the changes that they want for themselves.

What is Willpower?

In the survey that we just mentioned, it was reported that the biggest obstacle when it comes to people achieving change was the lack of willpower. Even though many people often place blame upon the scarcity of their willpower for their unhealthy choices, they are still grasping on to the hope of being able to achieve it one day. Most people in this study also reported that they think willpower is something that can be taught and learned. They are

absolutely correct. Some research recently has discovered many ways of how willpower can be strengthened with training and practice. On the contrary, some participants in the survey expressed that they think they would have more willpower if they had more free time to spare. However, the concept of willpower isn't something that increases automatically if a person has more time in their day. So that leads me to the next question, how can people resist when they are faced with temptation? Over the last several years, many discoveries were made about how willpower works by scientists all over the world. We will dive a little deeper into what our current understanding of willpower is.

Weak willpower isn't the only reason for a person to fail at achieving their goals. Psychologists in the field of willpower have built three crucial components when it comes to achieving goals. They said that you first need to set a clear goal and then establish the motivation for change. They said the second component was to monitor your behavior in regards to that goal. Willpower itself is the third and final component. If your goal is similar to the following; stop smoking, get fit, study more, or stop wasting time on the internet, willpower is an important concept to understand if you are looking to achieve any of those goals.

The bottom line of willpower is the ability to achieve long term goals by resisting temporary temptations and urges. Here are several reasons why this is beneficial. Over the course of a regular school year, psychologists performed a study that examined the self-control in a class of eighth grade students. The researchers in this study did an initial assessment of the self-discipline within the students by getting the students, their parents and teachers to fill out a questionnaire. They took it one step further and gave these students the task of deciding whether they want to receive $1 right away or $2 if they waited a week. At the end of the study, the results pointed to the fact that the students that had better test scores, better school attendance, better grades,

and had a higher chance of being admitted to competitive high school programs all ranked high on the self-discipline assessment. These researchers found that self-discipline played a bigger role than IQ when it came to predicting academic success. Other studies have found similar evidence. In a different study, researchers asked a group of undergraduate university students to fill out self-discipline questionnaires that will be used to assess their self-control. These researchers developed a scale that helped score the student's in relation to the strength of their willpower. They found that the students that had higher self-esteem, better relationship skills, higher GPA, and had less alcohol or drug abuse all had the highest self-control scores from the questionnaire.

Another study found that the benefits of willpower tend to be relevant well past university years. This self-control study was conducted in a group of 1000 people who had been tracked since birth to the age of 32. This is a long term study in New Zealand, where they wanted to learn more about the effects of self-control well into adulthood. They found that the people who had high self-control during their childhood grew up into adults that had better mental and physical health. They also had less substance abuse problems, criminal convictions, better financial security, and better money-saving habits. These patterns were proven even after the researchers had adjusted external influences such as socioeconomic factors, general intelligence, and these people's home lives. These findings prove why willpower is extremely important in almost all areas of a person's life.

Now that you have learned the importance of willpower and the role it plays in multiple stages of a person's life let's define it a little further. There are many other names used for willpower that is used interchangeably; this includes; drive, determination, self-control, resolve and self-discipline. Some psychologists will characterize willpower in even more specific ways. Some define willpower to be:

- The capacity to overcome unwanted impulses, feelings, or thoughts.
- The ability to resist temporary urges, temptation and delay instant gratification in order to achieve goals that are more long-term
- The effortful and conscious regulation of oneself.
- The ability to engage a “cool” cognitive system of behavior rather than a “hot” emotional system
- A limited resource that has the capability to be depleted

The Act of Delaying Gratification

Over 40 years ago, a famous psychologist studied self-control within children using a simple and effective test. You may have seen this study used before in modern-day experiments. His experiment is called the “marshmallow test.” This test has become extremely famous over the years as it laid the groundwork and then paved the way for modern studies of self-control.

This psychologist and his colleagues began the test by showing a plate of marshmallows to a child at the preschool age. Then, the psychologist let the child know that he had to go outside for a few moments and that he would let the child make a very simple decision. If the child could wait until the psychologist came back into the room, she could have two marshmallows. If the child could not or doesn’t want to wait, then she can ring the bell which then the psychologist would come back to the room right away but then she would only get to have one marshmallow.

Willpower can be defined as simple as the ability for a person to delay instant gratification. Children who have high self-control are able to give up the immediate gratification of eating a marshmallow so that they can be able to eat two of them at a later time. People who have quit smoking sacrifice the satisfaction of one cigarette in hopes of having better health and lower the risk of cancer in the future. Shoppers fight the urge to spend money at a mall so they can save their money for their future retirement. You probably get the point here.

This marshmallow experiment actually helped the researchers develop a framework that explains people's ability to resist or delay instant gratification. He proposed a system that he calls "hot and cool" in order to explain whether willpower will succeed or fail. The 'cool' system is naturally a cognitive one. It means that it is a thinking system that uses knowledge about feelings, sensations, goals, and actions that remind oneself, for example, why the marshmallow shouldn't be eaten. The cool system is very reflective, while the hot system is more emotional and impulsive. The hot system is responsible for quick and reflex-based responses to specific triggers, for example, eating the single marshmallow without thinking about the long term ramifications. To put this in layman's terms, if this framework were a cartoon, the hot system would be the devil and the cool system would be the angel on your shoulder.

When somebody's willpower fails, their hot system essentially overrides their cool system, which leads them to make impulsive actions. However, some people are more or less affected by the hot system triggers. That susceptibility to emotional responses plays a big role in influencing a person's behavior throughout life. The same researcher discovered that when he revisited his experiment with the children that had now grown up into adolescents, he found that the teenagers who were able to wait longer to

have two marshmallows when they were children were more likely to have higher SAT grades and their parents were more likely to rate them of having better ability to handle stress, plan, respond to reason and exhibit self-control in frustrating situations and could concentrate better without being easily distracted.

Funnily enough, the marshmallow study didn't end there. A few other researchers tracked down almost 60 people who are now middle aged, who had previously been a part of the marshmallow experiment as young children. These psychologists proceeded to test the participants' willpower strength using a task that's been proven to prove self-control within adults. Surprisingly, the participants' various willpower strengths had been very consistent over the last 40 years. Overall, they found that the children who were not successful in resisting the first marshmallow did poorly on the self-control tasks as an adult and that their hot stimuli seem to be consistent throughout their lifetime. They also began to study brain activity in some of the participants by using magnetic resonance technology. When these participants were presented with tempting stimuli, those who had low willpower exhibited brain patterns that were very different from the brain patterns of those that had strong willpower. They discovered that the prefrontal cortex (this is the region of the brain that controls choice making functions) was more active in the participants who had stronger willpower and the ventral striatum (an area of the brain that is focused on processing rewards and desires) showed increased activity in the participants who had weaker willpower.

Is Willpower a Limited Resource?

The hot-cold framework does a great job of explaining people's ability to delay

gratification but there is another theory that is called ‘willpower depletion’ that has emerged in recent years to explain what happens to people after they have resisted multiple temptations. Everyone exerts willpower every day in one form or another. People resist to surf the web or go on social media instead of finishing their work report. They may choose a salad when they are craving a slice of pizza. They may hold their tongue rather than make a snide remark. Recent growing research indicates that resisting temptations repeatedly takes a mental toll on a person. Some people describe willpower as a muscle that can get tired if overused.

The earliest discoveries of this concept came from a study that was conducted in Germany. The researcher brought participants into a room that smelled like fresh-baked cookies. The participants sat down at the table that held a bowl of radishes and a plate of those freshly baked cookies. The researchers asked some of the participants to taste those cookies while the others were asked to try the radishes. After this, the participants were assigned to complete a difficult geometric puzzle in 30 minutes. The researchers found that the participants who had to eat the radishes (therefore resisting the urge to eat the cookies) took 8 minutes to give up on the puzzle while the participants who got to eat the cookies tried to complete the puzzle for 19 minutes. The evidence here seems as if the people who used their willpower to resist eating the cookies drained their resources for future situations.

In the late 90s, this research was published, and since then, numerous other studies have begun looking into willpower depletion or otherwise known as ego depletion. One study, for example, the participants were asked to hold back and suppress any feelings they had while they watched an emotional film. These participants then participated in a physical stamina test but gave up sooner than the participants who watched the movie and reacted normally without any suppression.

Depleting willpower is very common in today's society. You have probably tried to make yourself be diplomatic when you are dealing with an aggravating customer or forced to fake happiness when your in-laws come to stay with you for an extended period of time. You must have realized that certain social interacts demand the use of willpower. There is also existing research that has proven that people interacting with others and maintaining relationships often is a high depleter of willpower.

Willpower depletion is not solely just a simple case of feeling tired. During another study by the same researcher, she had the participants in her study go through a whole day of sleep deprivation and then asked them to watch a movie but to suppress their emotions and reactions during it. She then proceeded to test the strength of the participant's self-control and found that those participants who didn't get sleep were not much more likely to be depleted of willpower compared to those who got a full night's sleep.

So if willpower isn't related to physical fatigue, then what exactly is it? Research studies recently have discovered a few different mechanisms that are possibly responsible for willpower depletion, some that were at the biological level. The researchers found that the people whos willpower became depleted after completing self-control tasks showed lowered activity in the region of their brain that controlled cognition. When willpower is being tested, a person's brain may begin to function differently.

Some other evidence indicates that people who have depleted willpower might be on low on fuel quite literally. Since the brain is an organ that requires high-energy that is powered by glucose, certain professionals suggested

that the cells in the brain that are responsible for maintaining a person's self-control uses up glucose quicker than it is being replenished. They performed a study with dogs where the dogs that were obedient and were asked to resist temptation showed lower blood glucose levels compared to the dogs that did not need to use self-control.

They found similar patterns in humans during scientific studies. The people who needed to use willpower in tasks were tested to have lower glucose levels compared to the participants that weren't asked to utilize their willpower. Moreover, replenishing glucose levels tend to help reboot a depleted willpower source in individuals that were depleted while drinking a sugar-free drink did not.

However, there is still evidence that suggests that the depletion of willpower can be maintained by a person's attitudes and beliefs. Different research and other colleagues found out that the people who felt the need to use their willpower (usually in order to please other people) were found to be more easily depleted compared to the people who are driven by their own desires and goals. These researchers, therefore, suggested that the people who are in better touch with themselves may be better off in life compared to the people who are often people-pleasing.

Some other researchers also studied how the effects of mood could affect a person's willpower. A study that took place in 2010 discovered that the group of people who believed that willpower is a resource that is limited were more likely to have willpower depletion. However, the group of people that did not believe that willpower can be depleted didn't show any symptoms or signs of willpower exhaustion after using their self-control. During the next stage of the same study, the psychologists manipulated the participants

subconscious beliefs by getting them to unknowingly fill out a biased questionnaire. The group that was manipulated to believe that willpower is for a fact a limited resource exhibited symptoms of willpower depletion/exhaustion while the group that believed that willpower was not depletable didn't show any signs of declining self-control.

So at the end of all this evidence and discussion, do you think willpower is a limited resource? Many ideas point to evidence that supports both spectrums of this answer. They argued that willpower depletion in the early stages could be buggered by factors such as belief and mood. However, more research is definitely required for us to explore how moods, attitudes, and beliefs might be affecting a person's ability to resist temptation.

Healthy Behaviors and Willpower

A person makes decisions every day in order to resist urges and gratification so that they can seek a more healthy and happy long term life. This could be in the form of refusing another portion of fries, forcing yourself to go work out, denying a second round of alcoholic drinks, or overcoming the temptation to skip early morning meetings. Willpower within everyone is being tested on a constant basis.

Lack of willpower is often known as the main obstacle to people's ability to maintain a healthy weight and physique. A lot of research actually supports this idea. A study found that children that had better self-control had less likelihood of becoming overweight when they grew up into their adolescence years due to their ability to delay gratification and control their

urges.

However, just like we talked about earlier, resisting those urges may diminish a person's willpower to resist the next temptation. A researcher proved this in a study where they offered students that were currently dieting some ice cream after watching a sad movie. Some of the participants were asked to watch the movie like any other normal day while the other group was asked to not show any reactions or emotions, which is a task that requires self-control. The psychologists discovered that the participants who had to use their self-control to withhold their emotions and reactions indulged in more ice cream compared to the participants who were allowed to watch the movie normally and react as they'd like.

A lot of people often place most of the blame on their bad moods for causing their 'emotional eating.' However, that study found that the participants' emotional states were not the cause of the amount of ice cream that they consumed. In layman's terms, the depletion of willpower had more significance than a person's mood when it comes to determining how much ice cream the participants ate.

We have to keep in mind that the reason behind why someone is on a diet will also play a role in willpower depletion. As we had just discussed, researchers found that people's attitudes and inner beliefs may create a buffer for them in terms of the effects of willpower depletion. In a further example that this based on this theory, the researchers asked participants to resist the temptation of eating cookies that were placed in front of them. He then tested the participant's strength of self-control by getting them to squeeze an exercise handgrip until they couldn't anymore He discovered through this exercise that the people who refused to eat the cookies for their own reasons (such as finding

enjoyment in resisting treats) showed better control in this physical test compared to the ones who refused the cookies for reasons that were external (wanting to impress the experimenter).

At this point, it is obvious that willpower is a required component when it comes to eating healthy. If a person is living in a surrounding where there were plenty of unhealthy but delicious food options, the action of resisting temptation is more likely to deplete willpower and even making it difficult for highly motivated healthy eaters. Since the behaviors of overeating are very complex, the role of willpower is argumentative when it comes to discussions for obesity treatments.

Some of the experts in the field of willpower believe that using self-control and personal choices causes people to be stigmatized, which makes them unlikely to be motivated to lose weight. Many dieticians advise against using willpower as a tool and argue that dieters should be focusing on lowering the effect that their environment will have on their eating habits and behavior. Ultimately, when it comes to the world we live in today, resisting the temptation to eat unhealthily can be a hard challenge. We are constantly exposed to ads for delicious high-calorie foods. Cheap and fast processed foods is available at our fingertips 24/7 and is less expensive compared to healthier options. A person's willpower and the environment that they live in plays a big role in people's choices when it relates to food. Having a better understanding of both of these elements will help individuals and dieticians that are battling obesity.

Not only does willpower play a role in eating healthy, but it also plays a role in the use, and possible abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Children who have developed self-control may avoid substance abuse in their

adulthood and teenagehood. Researchers in this field studied the self-control of adolescents as they moved from sixth grade to eleventh grade. They discovered that the kids who had problems with self-control in sixth grade, such as not speaking in turn during class, had more likelihood of using tobacco, marijuana, and alcohol as high schoolers.

This may not come as surprising, but willpower also plays a significant role in curbing alcohol abuse and usage. In another study, a researcher discovered that people who drank socially very often that used their willpower during the lab proceeded to go out and consume more alcohol compared to the other participants who didn't use their willpower stockpile. In a different study, the researcher found that the social drinkers who had used a lot of their self-control that day were more likely to infringe on the drinking limits that they created for themselves. This finding shows evidence that exerting self-control excessively in one situation can cripple a person's ability to fight off other temptations in different parts of their life.

We are talking a lot about willpower because understanding the role that it plays is very important for developing effective treatments and plan to battle serious issues like addictions to help guide people in making healthier choices for themselves. Willpower research offers people lots of suggestions on how to stick with healthy behaviors.

The Influence of Willpower on Financial Decision Making

The temptation of consuming in materialistic things like new shoes or a new car is a test of willpower that we have all experienced. Just like

how unhealthy food options have become plentiful, the opportunities for impulse spending has grown as well. ATMs are on every corner, and the rise of shopping online only allows a person to spend all their money without having to even leave the comfort of their couch. Willpower depletion affects people's ability to choose healthier lifestyle options and also affects their purchasing behavior.

Professors from the University of Minnesota did a study that focused on impulse buying and willpower depletion. They showed the participants a silent movie with a series of words that appeared on the bottom of the screen. A group of those participants were asked to not pay attention to those words, which were a task that required the use of self-control. After the movie, the participants were asked to look through a catalog with products like cars and watches and they wrote down the money amount that they were willing to pay for every single item. The participants that used self-control during the movie were willing to spend more money, about $30,000, while the participants who didn't deplete their willpower were willing to spend approximately $23,000.

In the next experiment, the researchers tested the spending behavior of the participants by showing them the opportunity to buy lower-cost objects like cups and decorative stickers. The group that had done self-control in the previous experiment expressed that they felt a higher temptation to buy those items. In fact, They purchased more items and spent more money compared to the participants who hadn't done the self-control exercise.

The task of making decisions financially can be much harder for people that are impoverished. researchers conducted various studies in India to explore the relationship between poverty and will power strength. in one study, this researcher visited two different Villages one that was poor and one that was richer. The researcher offered people an opportunity to buy a luxury

brand name soap at an extremely discounted price tag. This item was a great deal in terms of cost but it still showed that people who live in poverty had difficulty making financial decisions as such.

The participants in the study were told to squeeze a handgrip made for exercise, which is a popular test of strength regarding self-control, before and after the soap was offered to be purchased. The researcher found that the participants who had more money exercised the handgrip for the same amount of time prior and post to the opportunity to buy that soap. However, they found that poor participants squeezed the handgrip for a smaller amount of time after making a purchasing decision. Their willpower was depleted, and the researcher had concluded that it was likely run down by the difficulty of making that financial decision.

This research may sound depressing but there is a silver lining. If impoverished people have a higher chance of using up their willpower, then it could possibly mean that lowering the amount of hard decisions that they have to make every day to help prevent the depletion of willpower will give them the ability to make future decisions. A different researcher studied this effect amongst thanking customers in Southeast Asia. They offered customers the opportunity to open a savings account but it comes with a catch. These customers would only be able to withdraw their funds after reaching a targeted saving goal or target date that they have decided for themselves. A year later, the participants that signed up for these accounts saved 82% more than the participants who had not opened the special savings account. When the decision to save money or spending money is taken away, it helps customers avoid failing at self-control.

ll of this evidence collaborated to show that the people who are in the lower end

of the socioeconomic spectrum are more likely to deplete their self-control resources. It's not that people who don’t have money have less willpower than rich people; rather, the people that are living in poverty have to make more willpower draining decisions. This means that every decision they make, whether it is as simple as buying soap, will require self-control which, therefore, dips into their limited resources of willpower.

Improving Your Self-Control

A ton of research has been developed recently in order to explain the numerous elements of willpower. Many professionals that study this area of self-control to this with one goal on their mind. They are about these types of questions: If willpower is a limited resource, what can we do to conserve it? How can we strengthen willpower?

One effective tactic for maintaining willpower is simply to avoid temptation. In the marshmallow study, children were given a choice of being allowed to eat one marshmallow right away or having to wait an undefined period of time to have the opportunity to eat two marshmallows. They found that the kids who started at the marshmallows during the whole time were found to be less likely to resist the treat compared to the kids who shut their eyes and refused to look, looked away, or created a distraction for themselves. The technique of out of sight, out of mind, works with adults as well. In a recent study, researchers found that office workers who kept unhealthy snacks such as candy in their desk drawer consumed it less compared to when they would put the candy on top of their desks at eye level.

technique called “implementation intention” is another helpful tactic that helps improve willpower. These intentions are usually in the form of “if-then” statements that aid people in planning for situations that are likely to disrupt their goals. For instance, a person that is monitoring their consumption of alcohol may tell themselves before entering a drinking part that is anybody offers them an alcoholic drink, then they will request a plain soda with lime. Research has found that amongst adults and adolescents, implementing solutions will increase self-control, even if people already had their willpower depleted by other tasks. People that have a plan ahead of time allows them to easily make decisions in the moment without needing to draw upon their bank of willpower resources.

This research suggests that people have a bank of willpower that is limited raises a few troubling questions. Are people destined to fail if they are being faced with too many temptations? The answer is not necessarily. Many psychologists have the belief that a person’s willpower cannot be ever used up completely. Instead, people often have stored some backup willpower that is being saved for future demands. Those reserves are only available for the right type of motivation, allowing them to accomplish things even when their willpower has seemingly run out.

In order to demonstrate this idea, a researcher further found out that individuals who had their willpower used up ‘completely’ continued to be able to accomplish self-control tasks when they were being told that they would be compensated well for their actions or if their actions would bring benefit to other people. He concluded that having high motivation can overcome weaken self-control.

Will power can also be controlled in the first place to be less vulnerable to being completely depleted. Psychologists often use an analogy to describe will power as being similar to a muscle that will tire out after a lot of exercise. However, there is another element to this analogy. Although muscles will tire due to exercise during the short-term, they become stronger when regularly exercised over the long term. Just like physical exercise, self-control can become stronger when a person exercises willpower.

According to one of the earlier experiments that supports the idea above, the researchers asked participants in the study to follow a two-week guide to improve their moods, track their food intake, or improve their physical posture. Compared to the group that didn't need to exercise self-control, the participants who had to use their willpower by performing willpower heavy exercises were not as vulnerable to the depletion of self-control in a follow-up study. In another set of research, this researcher found that smokers who exercised willpower for two weeks by avoiding sweet foods or regularly squeezing an exercise handgrip, found more success when it comes to not smoking than other participants who performed two weeks of tasks that didn't require any self-control.

Other researchers have also discovered that using your willpower muscles can help a person increase the strength of their self-control over a period of time. Some researchers in Australia did a study where they assigned participants to a physical exercise program that lasted two months; this is a willpower-required routine. In the conclusion of this program, the participants that finished it scored better when measuring self-control compared to the other participants who were not assigned the exercise program. The participants that did the program were also reported to have been smoking less, eating healthier food, drinking less alcohol, improving their study habits, and

monitoring their spending habits more carefully. Regular exercise of a person's willpower using physical exercise seem to have led to an increase of will power in components of their daily lives.

The research findings regarding how glucose levels are tied to willpower depletion suggest a conceivable solution. A person that is maintains their blood sugar by eating regularly and often may help their brain replenish their storage of willpower. Those who are dieting aim to preserve their willpower while calorie reduction may be more effective by eating frequent and small meals compared to skipping out on entire meals like lunch or dinner.

All this evidence, founded from studies of the depletion of willpower, proposes that people making resolutions for the new year is the worst approach possible. If a person is running low on willpower in one specific area, it often reduces their willpower in all of the other areas. Focusing on one goal at a time makes more sense. In other words, don’t try to get into a healthy diet right away, quit smoking, and start a new workout plan all at the same time. A much better technique is to complete goals one by one. Once you have one single good habit nailed, people no longer need to use their supply of willpower to maintain that behavior. Habits that are healthy will eventually become a part of a person’s daily routine and would not need to use the energy of decision-making at all.

There are still many questions regarding the nature of willpower that needs to be answered by future research. However, it seems like if somebody has clear goals, good self-monitoring, and does a little bit of practice, they can train their self-control to be strong when faced with temptation.

BENEFITS OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

IN THE LAST CHAPTER, you learned about all the research that went behind studying willpower, which is a huge component of self-discipline. You learn that people's will power resources had the ability to be depleted but you also learned that having a positive mindset can create a buffer for which willpower is depleted. In this chapter, you will learn about the benefits that having strong self-discipline can bring. We will be discussing five main benefits that self-discipline can add to your life. In addition, we will also learn about what causes someone to have low self-discipline. In the previous chapter, we learned that will power has the ability to positively affect all aspects of a person’s life. Similarly, the lack of self-discipline can also negatively affect each and every aspect of a person's life.

Benefits of Having Self-Discipline

When a person has strong self-discipline, it leads to higher self-regard, inner strength, self-assurance, and ultimately to satisfaction and happiness. It leads to better outcomes in every area of a person's life. The following benefits of self-discipline are ones that may not automatically come to mind.

Benefit #1: Self Discipline Creates Inner Strength And Character

According to a famous psychology book, there was an important statement that the author wrote. He stated that everyone is the person that they wish to be. All that is stopping you from behaving in the manner that you want to behave is

your emotional mind. Let's think about that for a second. Although you may be a very kind and caring person, if you have a tendency to lose your temper easily, other people may see you as a hothead or an angry person. In this example, you don't necessarily need to change who you are as a person. Instead, you need to change the way you behave. Once you change the way you behave, other people will then see you for the person that you truly are. For example, you already are that kind and caring person but your short temper is preventing you from showing that personality to the world. Self-discipline is a tool that can help you to stop acting on your impulses and instead act based on your true character.

Benefit #2: Self-Discipline Allows You To Resist Temptations

As we discussed in chapter one, our modern-day lives are filled to the brim with temptations that can throw people off track and prevent them from achieving their goals. Often, these temptations are temporary, and by exercising willpower, most people can overcome the urge. In our modern workplace, temptations tend to take the form of distractions like checking your phone, a conversation at the water cooler, or scrolling through social media. Those examples are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to our modern-day potential distractions. When you are able to recognize what your temptations are, you can place a strategy in order to prevent caving to it. This requires less self-discipline compared to ignoring the temptation with brute mental force. For example, if your coworker locks her phone in the drawer of her desk and refuses to check her phone during the workday. She may make this strategy easier for her by telling all of her friends that she does this so that her friends do not expect an immediate response.

As we already learned, temptations also exist in the form of addictions and bad habits. When self-disciplined is coupled with effective strategies, it is a very valuable tool that can be used to overcome most urges in life.

Benefit #3: Stronger Self-Discipline Increases One’s Chances Of Success

When a goal can be achieved with great ease, some would argue whether or not it should even be considered a goal. Goals require a person to stretch and grow;

to improve skills, attitudes, and to improve one's knowledge. When an individual meets those requirements, they improve the quality of their life along with improving their capability to take on larger and harder challenges. Ultimately, goals should be challenging. Everyone will face barriers and obstacles in which they would need to overcome. This is the action that is needed in order to create personal growth. In order to overcome these obstacles and barriers to achieve your goals. It will require a lot of self-discipline and self-belief. A person's ability to persevere and overcome obstacles when faced with difficulty is often times the difference between failure and success.

Benefit #4: People With Self-Discipline Build Better Relationships

Take a minute to think about some of the things that you value in a relationship. This could be a friendship, a romantic relationship, or a familial relationship. You may value important things like integrity, dependability, loyalty, and honesty. All of these traits require a person to have a strong character. It requires someone who is able to be true and act true to their values and beliefs, even when it would be easier to fall into temptation. As we already discussed, those with self-discipline are more likely to develop a stronger character. They have a lot of practice in doing the things that they know need to be done, even though they would probably rather be doing something else. Generally, they are a person that most people can count on. They are more effective when it comes to gaining respect and building trust amongst their peers.

Benefit #5: Self-Discipline Makes It More Difficult For A Person To Be Offended

People with more self-discipline tend to be calmer, assured, and more confident. They know who they are as a person and what they believe in. They will always do what they believe to be the right thing. As we mentioned throughout this book, although the task that needs to be done may not be something that they want to do at that very moment in time, the strength of self-discipline demands them to be true to their values and beliefs. One of the major benefits of this behavior of a self-disciplined person is that they can always be confident that

they have done their best. If a person knows that they tried their very best and couldn't have done any better, they will be able to hold their heads up high, knowing that any insults or criticism are meaningless. However, this person would also be prepared to listen to any constructive criticism but negative feedback does not affect them much at all. To maximize the benefits of self-discipline, a person must have goals that are effective in motivating and inspiring them.

Causes of Low Self-Discipline

At this point, we've learned that having high self-discipline helps people establish their inner strength and character, enables them to withstand temptation, increases their chance of success, builds better relationships, and has more resistance to feeling offended. We will now discuss some of the causes as to why some people have low self-discipline. Having low self-discipline, not unlike having high self-discipline, affects people's performance in multiple aspects of their life. This includes the performance at work, school, relationships, sports, and financial well-being.

Lack of self-discipline shows up in all the different things that people do in their lives. Some people make sure that they do the big things in life but end up neglecting the little things. They do this to impress other people who don't know them very well. However, they tend to annoy and disappoint those that are close to them because it shows that they don't care enough about the people that they should be showing respect to. When people choose to not perform certain chores or duties, don't do what they say they would, don't show up for appointments, or don't make themselves presentable for every day, they are showing low self-discipline. So you may be wondering, why don't we take more responsibility for these everyday obligations? Below are two reasons why:

Attitude

One of the reasons why people don't take more responsibility for everyday obligations is because they don't believe in its importance. Why is this? Why do

some people take the time to be considerate, clean, trustworthy, and honest While others believe that those things are important? The answer is their attitude towards themselves, other people, and life itself. The former believe that people, including themselves, and other forms of life, are worth investing their energy, time, resources, and interest into. They are able to see the importance of Life while the latter have less regard for life and for themselves. All of the simply relates to love. When people have a love for life, they tend to respect all components of it. They take the time to appreciate and experience life as if it's a pleasure. Self-discipline comes from the willingness to take care of ourselves, other people, and other types of life. The lack of discipline shows less willingness to respect themselves or other things.

Commitment

The second reason why people don't take more responsibility for everyday obligations is because of the lack of commitment. A person's commitment, enthusiasm, and interest to a task determines the degree to which they can be distracted. When their commitment is very high, very few things have the power to distract them, but if they are doing something that is meaningless to them, their attention is easily distracted. This proves a strong link between self-discipline and commitment. People who have the inability to ignore, control, or bypass thoughts means that they have low self-discipline.

By learning the reasons behind why a person does not take more responsibility for everyday obligations, we are ready to learn the eight causes of poor self-discipline.

Cause #1: Lack of Awareness

The primary cause of low self-discipline is a lack of awareness. This component is important specifically to our imagination and thinking. People are unaware of the thoughts that take our attention are actually negative and can damage a person's well-being. These thoughts are fed into the conscious mind by the negative mind power to ensure that people have minimal time to spend just

simply just being mindful. If people are aware of the things that are happening within their own minds, they would know that self-discipline is needed to refocus our attention away from the flow of negative thoughts.

Cause #2: Character Weaknesses

People who have weak character often creates poor self-discipline. This includes aspects that have a low level of inner strength, mental toughness, courage, lack of love for other people, an absence of self-love, low interest in self-improvement, apathy, and a version of hard work, shortage of responsibility, Lack of self reflect, high levels of greed, and the inability to ignore Temptations in general.

If people place more importance on the desires, thoughts, and emotions that harm them more than the actions, thoughts, and people that help them, it will be difficult for them to develop high self-discipline. Each moment comes with a choice that a person has to make. It can either be something that helps them reach the goals that they have set for themselves, or they can fall into temptation and choose the action that has instant gratification.

Cause #3: Lack Of Ambition

Ambition is very effective in creating self-discipline by giving us a reason to work towards our goals, although we might rather be doing something else. However, it has a negative effect on our self-discipline if our ambition is in an honorable, ethical, or fulfilling one. It is obvious that people who lack the ambition to achieve goals in life will have a harder time building strong self-discipline because they don't have a reason to do it. This is why we discussed in chapter one that one of the main steps in developing strong self-discipline is coming up with clear and attainable goals. By coming up with a goal that is realistic, an individual can then create a plan of action that they can then hold themselves accountable to. They also need to continue finding the motivation and ambition to keep them striving towards their goals.

Cause #4: Having Goals That Have Low Importance

People that have goals that aren't that important tend to lack the ambition to achieve them and, therefore, will not be able to practice their self-discipline. If people set goals that looked good on the outside but didn't actually believe that they were necessary, or didn't see them as goals that are important enough to accomplish in the first place, then they may find it very difficult exercise self-discipline in order to put in the work to achieve them. One of the main motivating factors of self-discipline is having a goal that a person is able to stand by or is important to them. By having an important goal, or something that is meaningful to them, they will be able to find the self-discipline needed in order to complete the tasks required in order to achieve their goal.

Cause #5: Laziness

There are many temporary reasons as to why a person is not exhibiting self-discipline to do the things that need to be done. This could be sickness, tiredness, apathy, or something that is more appealing that is immediately available. If you find that these excuses are occurring often when you were trying to complete the task needed to reach a goal, you need to dig deep and find the real reason why you are choosing options that aren't the ones that will help you achieve your goal. Laziness is often the culprit in a lot of cases. The reasons for laziness usually runs very deep into an individual's psyche. If a person believes that there is a goal that is worthwhile, they will be motivated to keep working and applying themselves and making the decisions that make sense when it comes to achieving their goal. However, if they don't have any motivation to achieve their goal, it likely means that their goal isn't important enough, or the person has a natural tendency to be lazy and uninterested.

Cause #6: Lack of Self-Respect

A person who is lacking self-respect often doesn't put a lot of effort or importance in achieving personal excellence. They often don't really care what others think about them or whether or not they are helping out other people in their lives. You might be wondering what self-respect has to do with self-discipline. The answer is that it takes self-discipline in order to produce excellent

results, to achieve goals, and to help people who require it. When a person doesn't think about their own self-improvement, they tend to focus on other things that bring them pleasure such as instant gratification. They don't necessarily practice self-discipline because they are comfortable in indulging the instant gratification that life throws at them. If a person lacks respect for themselves, they are more likely to indulge in unhealthy conveniences like fast food or shopping impulses that we discussed in chapter one. If a person does have self-respect for themselves, they understand that this instant gratification may bring them joy and pleasure at the moment, but does very little in helping them achieve healthy long-term goals.

By the end of this chapter, you have learned the benefits of having high self-discipline, the causes of low self-discipline, and the effects it has on a person when they have low self-discipline. By understanding the psychology behind the concept of self-discipline, willpower, and self-control, a person is more likely to see the importance of having these traits if they are a person that wants to achieve the goals they have in life. I strongly believe that everyone has their own personal goals that they want to accomplish in their life. Those who say they don't may simply be too afraid of failure, and hide their fear behind their lies about how they don't have goals rather than coming to terms with the fact that they are scared of failing to achieve their goals. In the next chapter, we will be discussing why self-discipline is often the key to success. All the concepts and examples that you learned in the past two chapters will slowly come together in chapter 3 as you learn why self-discipline is absolutely needed when it comes to a person's ability to find success.

STRATEGIES TO BUILD UNBREAKABLE SELF-DISCIPLINE

AT THIS POINT in the book, you should have a good understanding of what self-discipline is, the benefits that it brings, and you should now be ready for steps that you can take to achieve it. Everyone faces difficult decisions when they are presented with temptations that are hard to resist. A person that is looking to eat healthier may struggle with their self-discipline when they are offered a hot fudge sundae. A person who is looking to gain some muscle mass may face a temptation of wanting to sleep in rather than going to the gym. People that have stronger self-control often spend less time thinking about whether or not to indulge in temptations that are bad for their health. Instead, they are able to make better decisions for themselves more easily. They don't let feelings or impulses affect their decision making. They are always able to make level-headed decisions. As a result of this, they feel more satisfied with their life as they are able to achieve more goals.

10 Steps to Achieve Self-Discipline in 10 Days

There are things that you can do in order to learn self-discipline and tap into your will power source in order to live a happier life. Below are 10 steps that you should follow in order to master your self-discipline over the course of 10 days.

Step 1: Learn What Your weaknesses Are

Everyone has their own set of weaknesses. They could range from a certain type

of food like chocolate, or it can be social media like Instagram, or even the latest addictive video game. Regardless of what it is, it has a similar effect on everyone.

The first step to mastering your self-discipline is to acknowledge your shortcomings, no matter what they might be. People often try to pretend that their weaknesses don't exist in order to portray themselves as a strong person. This is extremely ineffective when it comes to self-discipline. The purpose of acknowledging your weaknesses is not to make yourself feel bad. Instead, it helps you recognize what they are and will help you plan in advance to overcome them. Acknowledge your flaws; it is impossible to overcome them until you do this.

Step 2: Remove All Your Temptations

Once you have acknowledged your weaknesses, you can now move on to step two, which is to remove your temptations. Just like we mentioned in step one, everyone has their own set of weaknesses and it can range from small things like an unhealthy snack all the way to something that hinders your productivity like playing a video game for hours on end. By understanding what your weaknesses are, you can make accommodations for yourself that will help remove some of those temptations.

For example, if somebody is looking to lose weight and get fit at the gym, but they know that their weakness is that they always eat chocolate after dinner every night. Their temptation removal, in this case, would be to not buy any more chocolate that they keep around in their home. By not having chocolate in the home, they would be unable to fall into the temptation of eating it, which will hinder their progress of getting fit. However, this does not mean that they will never be able to eat chocolate again. This only means that they can indulge in their favorite snacks when they have achieved a certain portion of their goal. Rewarding oneself is important to self-discipline as well.

Step 3: Set Defined Goals and Create a Plan for Execution

In order to continue strengthening your self-discipline, a person must have a clear vision of what goals they are trying to accomplish. They must also have an understanding of what success means to them. If a person doesn't know where they're planning to go or what accomplishing their goals even and Tails, it is easy for them to lose their way or to get sidetracked.

Make sure the goals that you are setting have a clear and concise purpose. For example, don't use goals like “I want to be rich by the next five years.” This goal is too broad for it to have a strong meaning. Instead, you should make a goal that is quantifiable like “I am planning on saving $20,000 by the end of this year”. Then, when you have a quantifiable goal, you are able to make a plan that makes sense for yourself. In this example, a person can plan to save $2,000 each month for the rest of this year in order to hit their goal of saving $20,000 by the end of it. They can break down these goals even further, and figure out where in their budget they can save money or how they can make more money to accomplish that goal.

Step 4: Begin Building Your Self-Discipline

Self-discipline is not something that people are born with; it is mostly a learned behavior. Self-discipline is just like any other skill that people may be looking to grow; it requires repetition and lots of daily practice. Similar to going to the gym, the more you work out your muscles, the bigger and stronger they will become. Changes do not happen overnight, instead to strengthen your muscles and to grow them; it will take at least several weeks for a person to be able to see their progress. The effort and focus that training self-discipline requires can be extremely tiring.

The more time you practice self-discipline, it can become more and more difficult to keep utilizing your willpower. Sometimes when a person is faced with a big temptation or decision, they may feel that overcoming that large temptation makes it harder for them to overcome other tasks that also require self-discipline. The only way to move past this is to have a good mindset. By having a good mindset, it creates a buffer for how quickly your willpower

becomes drained. In addition, like the muscle example we used, by exerting your willpower more often, you will have a higher tolerance and therefore be able to exert it more than if you were just starting out.

Step 5: Keep it Simple and Create New Habits

To strengthen self-discipline, you need to work on instilling a new habit, which can feel very intimidating at first, especially if you are focusing on the entire goal all at once. To avoid this daunting feeling, keep it very simple. Break your bigger goal into smaller doable ones. Instead of trying to accomplish one huge goal all at once or to change all of your habits all at once, focus on doing just one thing consistently and exercise your self-discipline with that one small thing.

For example, if you are somebody that is looking to get into better shape, start by exercising for 10 to 15 minutes per day. Instead of trying to go to the gym for 2 hours every day, which can be very daunting, start with a smaller goal in mind first. By taking baby steps, you can get your mind used to that habit and slowly increase the amount of time that you spend at the gym. eventually, once you feel like that goal has become a habit, you can then begin to focus on other small goals and keep building up words from there.

Step 6: Implement a Healthier Diet

We learned in the earlier chapters that glucose levels play a big role in a person's brainpower, which controls a person's willpower. The sensation of being hungry can cause people to feel angry, annoyed, and irritated. This feeling is real and everyone has felt it before and often has a huge impact on a person's willpower. Research has found evidence that having low blood sugar weakens a person's ability to make good decisions.

When a person is hungry, their ability to concentrate suffers a lot, and their brain doesn't function as optimally. Therefore, a person’s self-control is likely to be weakened when their body is in this state. To prevent this, make sure to be eating small meals constantly to prevent yourself from feeling that annoying hungry feeling that causes people to have a lapse in judgment. Since exercising

willpower takes up a lot of energy from a person's brain, make sure to keep fuelling it with enough glucose so that the brain is able to keep functioning at an optimal level.

Step 7: Adjust Your Own Views Regarding Willpower

We learned in the earlier chapters that a person's point of view or their beliefs could create a buffer of how long it takes to have their willpower drained completely. Although most researchers believe that there is a limit to how much we can tap into our willpower, they also found that the people who believe that there wasn't a limit had a bigger will power stockpile. If a person believes that they have a limited amount of willpower, they probably will not be able to surpass those limits. However, if a person does not place a strict limit on themselves, they are less likely to use up their willpower stockpile before meeting their goals.

A person's internal perception about their own willpower and self-control plays a huge role in determining how much willpower they have. If a person can remove these obstacles by believing that they have a large stockpile of willpower, and believing in themselves, then they are less likely to drain out there will power compared to someone who believes that they don't have much of it. So try changing your own perception of how you see your willpower. Try to think of it as a source that can run out, but because of your beliefs, you have a larger amount of it. This is a much better mindset to be in compared to thinking that willpower will run out so therefore you should be stingy with it.

Step 8: Make a Backup Plan

Many psychologists use a famous technique that helps with boosting willpower called “implementation intention.” This technique is where you give yourself a plan when you are faced with a potentially difficult situation. We used this example earlier; if a person is trying to reduce the amount of alcohol that they drink and they know that they are going to a party where they will be asked if they want to drink alcohol, instead of always asking for a beer like they normally

do, they will instead ask for a plain soda with lime.

By making a plan before going to a situation that you know where you will be confronted with big temptations, you will have an action plan in place where you can automatically use rather than having to come up with an excuse on the spot and risking failure. When a person goes into those situations with a plan, it helps give them the mindset and the self-control that is necessary to overcome obstacles. They will be able to save energy by not having to make sudden decisions or make sudden plans based on their emotional state. This will make them less likely to cave in to temptations and more likely to exercise their self-discipline.

Step 9: Reward Yourself

Just like anything else in life, it is necessary to give yourself a break and to give yourself a reward. Give yourself something to look forward to by planning an appropriate reward when you accomplish your goals. This is not much different from when you were a little kid, and you got a treat from your parents for showing good behavior. When a person has something to look forward to it gives them the extra motivation that they need to succeed.

Anticipation is a powerful thing. It gives people something to focus on so that they are not only thinking of all the things that they need to change. When you have achieved one of your goals, you can find yourself a new goal and a new reward in order to keep motivating yourself to move forward. However, the reward should not be something unhealthy. For example, in the previous example of the person that is trying to lower their alcohol intake, their reward for not drinking as often should not be that they will go binge drinking next Friday. Their awards should be something healthy that won't make them lose progress on all the work that they've done.

Step 10: Keep Moving Forward Using Forgiveness

Even if a person has all the best intentions and the most well-made plans, sometimes they will fall short when practicing self-discipline. Avoiding failure

altogether is impossible, and we should not build a mindset around that. Everyone will have their ups and downs, their successes and their failures. The key to overcoming the failures that you will face is to simply to keep moving forward. If you stumble on your journey of self-discipline, instead of giving up altogether, acknowledge what caused it, learn from it, and then move on. Don't let yourself get caught up in frustration, anger, or guilt because these emotions are the ones that will de-motivate you and get in the way of your future progress. Learn from the mistakes you have made and be comfortable with forgiving yourself. Once you have done that, you can get your head back in the game and start where you left off.

Self-Discipline Strategies That Will Help You Achieve Your Goals

In this subchapter, we will be taking a look at two different self-discipline strategies that has been proven to help people achieve their goals. We will be learning about visualization and meditation. Although these may sound ‘airy-fairy,’ there are existing research studies that prove them to work. Many professional athletes across the world employ these types of strategies every day to help them with their training. Let’s take a look at visualization first.

Using Visualization to Achieve Your Goals

Most people have tried to visualize their goals at least a couple of times in their lives. They probably spend a lot of time visualizing a desired future event. For the general public, visualization is a process where they picture their future within their mind. However, visualization can be used for so many more things. Visualization is a type of inner transformation that leads to the realization of external results in reality. It's also known as a form of creative thinking or consciously making and shaping your life with a purpose in mind. The best part about the image is that a person may have envisioned is that it doesn't have to rely upon the external events of reality. It can be entirely dependent on the imaginative powers of a person.

Within a person's inner world, they are able to be anyone or anything that they

decide to be. It doesn't matter what is happening externally, as it doesn't make a difference to the conscious process of visualization. You might be thinking that this sounds very airy-fairy. However, don’t get confused here; visualization is not just a fantasy that someone made up. It is a proactive and very conscious activity where a person is able to actively visualize things or events in their mind in a specific way to help them impact their external reality positively. Therefore, there is a strong connection between visualization and the real world that we live in, but it does not have to entirely depend on that world. Visualization argues that how a person behaves within the outer world of reality is dependent on how the person creates their internal world for themselves every day.

The Key To Improved Performance Is Visualization

Here is something that I bet not many people know: Visualizing an action or a skill before actually performing that action is just as powerful as doing that action in real life. Scientific research has found tons of evidence that people’s thoughts create the exact same instructions in their mind as it does with actions. This means that when somebody is rehearsing or practicing an action in their mind using visualization, it actually impacts the many cognitive processes within a person's brain that includes planning, motor control, memory, and attention perception. In layman's terms, a person’s brain is activated in the exact same manner when they are visualizing an action compared to when they are doing that action physically. Ultimately, scientists can safely assume that the act of visualization is just as valuable as physically performing an action.

Many athletes in certain sports use the act of visualization to help themselves train before a competition. For example, in Olympic cycling, the cyclist will prepare for a competition by closing their eyes and visualizing the racetrack in their mind. They move their bodies while visualizing the way that they will travel through the racetrack in order to train their muscle memory and reflexes even further. This way, when they do begin to compete on the racetrack, they have already visualized themselves cycling through it using the strategies that they have been taught and visualized in their minds. This is a technique and

training skill that many professional coaches teach their athletes to do.

When a person is visualizing, their conscious mind is actively aware that the things they're visualizing is not real but is just produced via imagination. Despite this, a person's subconscious doesn’t have the ability to identify the difference between what a person is imagining and what they are actually doing. In other words, a person's inner-mind isn't able to distinguish the difference between real life, an imagined future, or a past memory. Rather, the mind is under the impression that everything a person sees is real. This is proven by numerous brain scans that scientists have conducted over the years, where they discovered that there is no difference in brain activity when someone is observing something in the real world compared to when a person is visualizing.

All of this evidence is extremely important because it points the theory that by using visualization, people can develop skills that are completely new to them and be able to reprogram and rewire their mind without the requirement of performing those actions physically. For example, if somebody is looking to increase their self-esteem, then they start by boosting their self-esteem using the process of visualization by imagining themselves doing those actions before actually doing it in the real world.

Just like how this method is effective for a person to increase their self-esteem, this is also very helpful for people that are looking to increase their self-discipline because it helps minimize the feelings of anxiety. By using the technique of working through scenarios in a person’s mind can help them effectively require their brain in order to build new patterns, habits, and behaviors which makes completing tasks in the real world far less anxiety-ridden. Due to this, you will feel much calmer when you actually bring those performances into your real life.

How Worries Are Reprogramming Your Brain

When a person is experiencing negative emotions like anxiety, fear, worry, or stress, it actually is a form of negative visualization. It is an unconscious type of

visualization where a person is not aware that they are negatively visualizing, but it is still a type of visualizing nonetheless. Every time a person stresses or worries about something, they often suffer from having anxiety or fear about what they think the future holds, they are actually in a moment of negative visualization. In addition, in that moment, the person is actually rewiring their own brain in limiting ways. It is exactly like how a person's mind can be reprogrammed to foster positive habits; it is also able to be reprogrammed negatively.

When a person indulged in the negative worries that they're feeling in the moment, they are building on the existing neural pathways within their brain. Due to this, every time a person envisions something negative, it makes it easier for them to have the same future worries. A person's negative visualizations can make a person feel uneasy or anxious at that moment. It makes it worse that a person's subconscious doesn't have the ability to tell the difference between a visualization and what the person actually sees. Due to this, the person's brain views those events as if it is happening in real life, which causes the neutral networks to be formed in their brain which creates new beliefs, habits of behaviors and perspectives. In plain English, the person is effectively building new patterns by rewiring their brain to support all the things that they have negatively envisioned.

When a person does that, it means they are developing a behavior or skill that is unhelpful. The more often that this person thinks about this pattern, the easier it is for their mind to keep replaying that pattern repeatedly until the action of worrying becomes a habit that is triggered when a person faces any level of uncertainty. In addition to this, when a person worries about certain things, those specific things have a higher chance of manifesting in their daily life. This is due to a person's Reticular Activating System, which happens when a person begins to focus on negative things. Their brain is now searching for anything possible within a person's reach that would support those worries. Due to this, everything a person sees will then validate all the things that they worry about. In addition, every time a person makes bad decisions or choices based on their flawed

perspective, it leads to them have their worries manifested into their real world.

This all sounds very incredible, I know. The best part about this is that the exact process that is at play when someone is visualizing negative things also works in a positive way with the goals that they want to achieve. This process initiates the Reticular Activating System which helps people become more aware of the events, opportunities, and other people that are related to their goals. This leads to the person making conscious and subconscious choices based on that information which helps them achieve their goals in reality. Due to this, visualization is often accidentally used in a negative way but it can also be used in a very helpful and empowering way. Whichever one you choose is a choice you can make.

Positive Visualization Techniques

In this chapter, we will be taking a look at four different types of visualization techniques that a person can use to help improve their life. These techniques include:

- Mastering a new skill
- Healing your mind and body
- Achieving your goals
- Creating a plan

We will be learning about the process of the steps that a person can follow in each of those areas while also discussing the benefits of those techniques. Let’s dive right in.

Mastering A New Skill

One way a person can learn a new skill is to utilize visualization. The technique of visualization is extremely effective when a person is learning new skills due to the way that the brain is activated is exactly the same as when someone is visualizing the skill and when they physically do that skill. For instance, a study

that an Australian psychologist did that studied the visualization technique in regards to a person's ability to accomplish free throws in basketball. This is when a player in a basketball team shoots the ball from the free-throw line after the referee calls a foul during a game.

This psychologist chose three groups of students at random who have never tried visualization before. The first group practiced the skill of free throwing for 3 weeks straight. The second group only practiced free throws twice, once on the first day and once on the last day. The third group did the same. However, the people in the third group visualized free throw for thirty minutes every single day. If they had "missed" in their visualized free throw, they "practiced" getting the free throw right the next shot. On the last day of this experiment, the psychologist measured how the participants improved using percentages. The group that got physical practice every day improved their free throws by 24%. The second group that only practiced twice did not improve at all. However, the third group who had practiced just as much as the second group did 23% better, which is almost as well as the first group. At the end of this experiment, the psychologist published a paper that was about how most effective visualization happens when the visualizer is able to see what they are doing. In other words, the ones that practiced visualizing the free-throw actually 'felt' the basketball in their hands and 'saw' it go through the hoop and have heard it 'bounce.'

You can also use visualization to learn and master any skill of your liking. The most important thing is to try to utilize all your senses when you begin your visualization. Here are a simple 5 steps to teach you how to visualize properly:

1. Pick a skill that is of interest to you.
2. Identify what your real-world proficiency level is in this skill.
3. Visualize yourself doing this skill using all five of your senses in as much detail as possible.
4. Do this visualization for 11 days at 20 minutes per day.
5. Try this skill in reality and keep track of measuring your improvement. Continue visualizing while doing that skill in real life if you are not

satisfied with the results

Creating A Plan

Whenever you are feeling stressed and/or overwhelmed, visualization can be a great way to help you build a plan that helps you take proactive action and to stay centered. This visualization technique is most effective when practiced at the end of the day, so you can use it to begin planning the work for your next day. You don't have to be too strict with this as you can also choose to use this technique throughout your day whenever you have a few minutes of free time.

Below are three simple steps to do this:

1. Calm yourself down, and make sure you are feeling relaxed. Sit down as it will help you get some rest from whatever you were doing before.
2. Close your eyes and start to visualize specifically the things that you are looking to accomplish for the rest of your day and tomorrow. Visualize every action that you need to take in specific detail and then ask yourself the following questions:
3. How do I want to feel?
4. What do I want?
5. How will I interact with others?
6. What specific actions do I want to take?
7. How will I overcome obstacles?
8. What obstacles will I potentially face?
9. What do I want to achieve?
10. The reality here is that people are not able to predict all the things that might happen to them. When events happen unexpectedly, they can often ruin any plans that have been put in place. However, good planning isn't about planning around all possible obstacles, but it is more about adapting to the obstacles that life gives you. When you keep this in mind, it is important that you affirm with yourself at the end of your visualization with "this or something better will come my way."

> By giving yourself affirmation, you are maintaining an open mind for the endless possibilities to come. This will help you feel more prepared and comfortable with making changes when unexpected things happen to you.

This process is definitely not a foolproof plan. However, this visualization will help you envision possible situations that might happen.

Achieving Your Goals

This visualization technique is the most important one when it comes to strengthening self-discipline. By using the technique of visualization for setting goals brings a lot of value, but this technique does come with one major drawback. The most popular form of visualization is goal setting. Most people have definitely used visualization pertaining to their goals at one time or another. However, this technique may not have worked for them due to one critical flaw. This flaw is that when people are visualizing their goals, they often are only visualizing their goals at the end. They imagine their flashy goal at the end of all the hard work that's going to be rainbows and butterflies. Yes, they are experiencing this using all of their sensories but they simply open their eyes after the visualization feeling very inspired. However, this type of motivation is extremely short lived because the next time this person faces an obstacle, it immediately deflates their motivation.

When this happens, people need to visualize their goals all over again in order to create more motivation for themselves. However, because nothing happens after every visualization, their motivation stays stagnant and does not grow, and therefore, their hunger towards achieving that goal is not growing as well. In fact, every time a person hits an obstacle and they try the process of visualization again, their motivation becomes weaker every time and as time goes on, they begin to lose energy as well. So what are they doing incorrectly?

What they are doing incorrectly is that they are not visualizing their goals properly. They only see the destination, but they don't understand that achieving

a goal requires much more than just that. The journey of achieving a goal is full of wins and losses, highs and lows, and a journey that is jam-packed with ups and downs. Due to this, these are the things that a person would also need to include in their visualization.

When a person visualizes their end goal, it is very effective in creating that desire and hunger. However, the proper way to use visualization is to only spend 10 percent of your time visualizing the end goal and spending the leftover 90% of the time visualizing the ‘how’ behind achieving your goals. This will include visualizing yourself, overcoming challenges, and facing setbacks and problems. In some ways, it’s similar to the form of visualization planning that we just discussed.

A person’s end goal creates the inspiration that they need long term, but the actual journey itself helps a person stay motivated in the short term. If you are trying to maximize the time that you spend on achieving small goals to get to your end goal, you must visualize those as well.

Below are five steps that you can follow to achieve this visualization:

1. Get yourself to a quiet place and sit down, and shut your eyes. Start to imagine what your end goal will look like. Imagine yourself experiencing and living this goal using all five of your senses.
2. Slowly begin to take steps back from your end goal and imagine the process that was in place that you took in order to achieve your end goal. Imagine yourself overcoming all of the problems and obstacles that you had to face. Keep visualizing every single step until you find yourself back into your present moment.
3. Move forward in time now and visualize how you took advantage of opportunities and the happy coincidences that aided you in overcoming any barriers. Try to see as clearly as possible how things unfolded for you.
4. At the end of your visualization, take a few moments to send your

future self some positive energy for their journey.

5. When you exit the visualization, immediately detach yourself emotionally from the outcome of your goal. One thing that can hold you back is if you are having an emotional attachment to a specific result. Instead, try to stay open-minded and be flexible for the journey ahead.

You can use visualization using those steps on a daily or weekly basis. Your weekly sessions can be as long as 30 minutes, and you can keep your daily sessions shorter so they are between 5 - 10 minutes. However, be sure that you are focusing your daily sessions on achieving the next steps of your goal for that specific day or upcoming week. This will keep you moving forward towards your goal. Then, you can focus your weekly visualizations using the five steps above.

Using Meditation to Achieve Your Goals

One of the most powerful and inspiring things that humans can do is being able to visualize the things that they want to manifest and then actually making it happen. The power of the human mind is extraordinary, especially when it is coupled with mindfulness practices like meditation. Using meditation, a person can increase their ability and make heaps of progress towards the life that they want to create for themselves.

Goal setting is the first action that a person needs to make in order to reach their goals. The purpose behind setting a goal is so that a person would be able to achieve their desired results. When a goal is set carefully with focus, momentum, action, and intention, setting and achieving goals is the first step a person needs to take in order to move from where they are not to where they want to be. However, they need to know where it is that they want to be. The “where” begins with a person envisioning it.

The first step to this is to start with imaging the end in mind and work backward (this is what we discussed in the visualization chapter. Many people mistake their goal for vision thinking when the goal is actually the end result. They will

set a goal without thinking about what the goal will allow them to do, be, or have in the long term. In order for a person to make the most out of their goal-setting process, it is important to think about what quality of lifestyle they would want to ultimately achieve. For the purpose of clarity, let's talk a little bit more between a person's vision and their goal.

Your Vision vs. Your Goal

A person's vision isn't something that needs to be created from scratch; in fact, it is something that already exists inside them. They simply need to get in touch with it. A person's vision is the big picture of their desired outcomes. It represents the most important things to that person and is often compelling, inspiring, exciting and filled with many positive emotions.

A goal, on the other hand, is different. A goal is very specifically designed that requires tasks that need to be completed in order to get to the thing that they want at the end of their journey. The downside here is that a person's goal may not initiate those positive emotions that become an inspiration. Goals act more like stepping stones on a path that will lead you to your ultimate end goal.

The most popular and effective way to build your goals is using the SMART goals format. You may have done or heard of this before at your workplace or while you were in school. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, resources, and time. This helps you make sure that your goals are specific and concise, you have a way of measuring them, they are goals that are achievable, you have or have a way of getting the necessary resources, and you have a timeline in which you want your goals to be met.

By using imagery that is vivid and highly detailed, it is a very powerful way for someone to train their mind to go after the things that they want. Remember, when we discussed how athletes often use visualization to help themselves train? For example, famous golf athlete Tiger Woods has been using visualization to help train his golfing techniques ever since he was a teenager. Even the NBA star Michael Jordan used mental imagery to help get himself into the mindset that he

wants to be in order to make his famous three-point shots. If professional athletes use visualization techniques, they can enhance their ability to be the best. You can also use visualization and meditation to help you achieve your goals.

10 Steps to Meditation to Help You Achieve Your Goals

In this ten-step guide, we will be using a mix of visualization and meditation to guide you into focusing on your goals. This is very similar to what we learned with visualization. Researchers have found that visualizing and meditating to the process of a person achieving their goals will help them to actually do it in real life. Try these following steps of a guided meditation to help put your goal into the future:

1. Start by thinking of an area of your life in your mind. Choose something where you have been struggling with, or you would like to change.
2. Now start to imagine the best possible outcome that you would like to be living in regards to the area that you've selected. Imagine this 6 to 12 months from now. What is the reality that you are looking to achieve? Try not to get caught up with any negativity or limitations; instead, just allow yourself to imagine and get carried away with your strongest goals.
3. Focus your mind on connecting with just one goal that you would like to achieve over the next three months. Make sure your goal is a good one and is as meaningful as possible. If you choose a goal that isn't meaningful or doesn't hold a lot of weight, the end result won't feel special for you. Make sure to choose something that is significant enough so that once you achieve this goal, you will feel a high sense of accomplishment and motivation for your next goal. Be sure to run your goal through the SMART acronym to ensure that it is a goal that is set up for success.
4. Now that you are starting to feel connected with the goal that you've set, try to imagine what your life will be like once you achieve the goal.

Visualize a picture or movie in your mind and try to view it as if you are looking at it through your own pair of eyes. Factor in all the other sensory perceptions to try to imagine the most real and positive feelings. Where are you? Who is with you? What are the things happening around you?

5. Now, begin to step out of the picture or movie that you've imagined and begin to imagine yourself floating up in the air above where you are sitting now while taking that imagery with you. Take a deep breath and as you breathe out, use your breath to give life to the image and fill it with intention and positive energy. Repeat this five times.
6. In this step, it is time to imagine yourself floating out into the future while imagining yourself dropping the imagery that you've created for your goal down into your real life below you at the exact time and date that you've set for yourself to reach this goal.
7. Pay attention to all the things that need to happen between then and now and how it is beginning to re-evaluate itself in order to support you in achieving that goal. Visualize this process and all those events to make it feel as realistic as possible.
8. Once you feel like that step is complete, bring your awareness back to the present, and with your eyes still shut, start to think about what steps you will need to take in the next few days that will help you move closer to achieving your goal.
9. Take a few more deep breaths in order to ground yourself to the present before opening your eyes. Now, before you forget, write down a list of steps that you need to take in order to achieve your goal or begin to write down your experience in your journal, so you don't forget.
10. In this last step, you will focus on taking action and staying focused. Make sure that you are doing something that brings you closer to achieving your goal on a daily basis.

Use this meditation and visualization technique once a week after you first complete the steps. By doing this once a week, it helps you continue to move

forward towards your end goal and help you bring your vision into real life. Seeing is believing, so using your mind and meditation, you are able to create the best future that you have imagined for yourself.

DISCIPLINE OVER MOTIVATION

IN THIS CHAPTER, we will be taking a look at why having self-discipline is more important than having motivation. A common excuse that people use regarding their low-self discipline is, "I don't have any motivation to do this right now. I'll wait until I feel motivated to do this task." This chapter will help you move past this mindset and into one where you focus less on your motivation levels and more on how to create motivation for yourself by doing your tasks. We will take a look at how you can break down your goals into more manageable ones and learning how to beat procrastination using discipline.

Motivation is Created When You Act

People often have the wrong mindset where they think that they need to feel fully motivated before they start working on a task/job. This mindset is unrealistic. People's motivation often does not arrive until they have started that task and are beginning to see progress. When people see progress, they start to see the fruits to their labor, and they become even more motivated to keep working until they have completed their task. You might be wondering what about the motivation that is needed in order to start working altogether? The answer to this is that a person needs to have a good understanding of the

‘why’ and the vision of that particular job. Before you even begin working on it, you should know what the benefits are going to be. You would be surprised at how many people waste a lot of time doing work that actually does not need to be completed. Moreover, people should be using prioritization in order to get the most urgent and important work out of the way first. By understanding the benefits of completing a task or job, you will fully be able to estimate its importance. In terms of smaller tasks/jobs, simply understanding what the benefits are of completing that task should be enough for motivation. For larger tasks and jobs, it is important that you have a way to measure your progress so you can further gain motivation and confidence from your work.

Breaking Down Your Goals Into Manageable Ones

One main reason that people put off doing the work that they need to do is because they subconsciously find that their work is too overwhelming for them. Start by just breaking down whatever that task is into littler parts and then focus on one at a time. If you find yourself still wanting to procrastinate after you’ve already broken it down, then break it down even more. You will eventually get to a point where the task that you need to do is so easy that you would feel very badly about yourself if you didn’t just do it.

For example, imagine that one of your goals is to manage your money better. It is tax season, and you need to complete your taxes in order to understand your financial situation. Imagine that you are feeling overwhelmed as you don’t even know where to begin filing your taxes. You are also afraid that you may owe money to the government that you might not have. Here is how I would break down the large and broad task of ‘filing taxes’:

1. Research the best way to file taxes for beginners
2. Explore my options (either downloading software for DIY or going to a tax filing company)
3. Pick which option suits you best
4. Gather the documents that are suggested based on which option you chose in step #2
5. Follow the instructions given to you by the tax software or the tax professional

Suddenly that one large task of ‘filing taxes’ became much more manageable. Instead of thinking about filing taxes as one large unit, you are now starting with a simple google search of the best way to file taxes for beginners. From there, now you can make an educated decision on which method is easiest for you to proceed with. By taking things one step at a time, your mind becomes less overwhelmed.

Overcoming Procrastination With Self-Discipline

Procrastination is often something that those with low self-discipline suffer with. However, we learned that motivation is something that happens after you take action rather than before. In order to overcome procrastination, you can’t sit around waiting for motivation to hit, you have to begin your task in order to create motivation. In order to start doing a task without motivation, you need to utilize your willpower and self-discipline. Let’s take a look at 11 steps that we can take to overcome procrastination and begin creating motivation for ourselves. The first step is to break down a big goal into littler ones, which we just talked about. Let’s start from step 2.

Step 2: Change Your Environment

Different types of environments produce different impacts on a person's productivity. Take a look at your work space, does looking at it make you want to go back to bed? Or does it look inviting enough to make you want to jump right into work? It's the former; you may want to consider changing up your workspace to make it more inviting. For instance, I used to have stronger feelings of procrastination when my desk was cluttered. It did not look inviting, and in fact, it added stress as now I needed to clear up my work space before doing a task that I didn't even really want to do in the first place. By keeping your workspace clean, tidy, and inviting, you can skip the step of having to tidy up before getting your hands dirty with work.

Step 3: Create A Detailed Plan With Deadlines

When a person just has one singular deadline for a large task, it's basically an invitation to procrastinate. This is because people get under the impression that they have time and continue to keep pushing things back until the deadline is looming over them. In step one, we discussed breaking down your task into smaller ones. In this step, we will actually make our own deadlines for each small task. The purpose of this is so you have a general idea when you have to finish each task. If you don't finish one step by the deadline that you have set, you are jeopardizing every step that's planned after that. This helps create some urgency.

Step 4: Eliminate Your Procrastination Temptations

If you are someone who is a constant procrastination offender, it may be because you make it very easy for yourself to be distracted. Be self aware – what are the things that you typically find yourself doing when you're supposed to be doing something else? Is it browsing the internet? Scrolling your phone? Identify what exactly it is that is tempting you to procrastinate and try to prevent yourself from being tempted in the first place. If you are easily distracted by your phone, turn it off for an hour, put it in a drawer, and begin to work. Some people may extreme and go as far as disabling all their social media accounts so they can prevent themselves from endless browsing. It doesn't have to be extremely drastic but takes preventative measures, so it's not too easy for you to procrastinate.

Step 5: Surround Yourself With People Who Inspire You

Choosing who you spend your time with heavily influences your behaviors. If you are spending time with people who also procrastinate and don't see anything wrong with it, then you are likely to think that that is okay. Instead, try to surround yourself with people that are motivated and have achieved many goals before. You will soon be able to gain some of their motivation and spirit as well.

Step 6: Get A Buddy

When you have a large set of tasks that you need to get done, having a buddy will make the process way more fun. Your buddy should ideally be someone that also has their own large set of tasks/goals that they want to complete. The two of you will hold each other accountable for the tasks that need to be done. It is not required that both of you need to have the same goals, but if they are, even better! Many people that have goals of getting more fit will likely find themselves a workout buddy that will help hold them accountable for going to the gym or even planning workout sessions together.

Step 7: Tell Others About Your Goals

This serves a similar function as the step before but on a much larger scale. Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about the goals that you have in mind. This works better if you tell them details like your deadlines or the plan that you've made for yourself. Now the next time you see these people, they will likely ask you what your status is on your goals, therefore, creating motivation for you. Also, people tend to not want to 'fail' in front of others, so if you know that you are seeing those people soon, you are more likely to make sure that you have made some progress so you can update them on it.

Step 8: Seek Out Someone Who Has Achieved Your Goal

If your goal is one that you think other people have accomplished before, try to find out who these people are. Seek them out and connect with them in order to ask them about their experience. You can learn

about what obstacles and failures that they faced along the way, and they'd be able to provide you with some tips that may have made their journey a little bit easier. Moreover, seeing living proof that your goals are ones that are achievable may help you take action even sooner.

Step 9: Re-Clarify Your Goals

If you are someone that has been procrastinating for a long time now, it might be due to the misalignment of what you're currently doing and what you want. People often outgrow their goals when they begin to learn more about themselves. However, they don't always adjust their goals based on those changes. Try to take a weekend to yourself and regroup. Ask yourself, 'what exactly do I want to achieve? Are the things that I am doing now aligning with that? If not, what can I do to change it?' Adjusting your goals to something that lines up with who you are presently is crucial in terms of creating motivation and value for yourself.

Step 10: Don't Overcomplicate

This relates back to a point we talked about earlier in this book. There is never a 'perfect time' to do a task that you need to do. You may be identifying all the reasons why the present moment is 'not the best time,' but that is the wrong mindset to have. Even if you only had 10 minutes, you can surely get SOMETHING done that is related to your goal. Abandon this thought of waiting for 'the perfect time' because there will never be one. After you break down your goals into smaller ones, start doing them whenever you have 10

minutes free. It’s as simple as that.

Step 11: Just Do It

At the end of it all, everything comes down to simply just taking action. Just like how we learned motivation comes from starting something and not before, just simply taking the first step to doing something will create the motivation you need to keep you going. A person can do all the planning and strategizing they need, but if they don’t actually take the first step, nothing will happen.

BUILDING GOOD HABITS

AT THIS POINT in the book, you have learned the 10 major steps that a person can take to achieve stronger self-discipline. All of these steps are pretty basic, and any person, no matter how experienced or inexperienced, would be able to follow them without much difficulty. We are going to take this a little bit further and I'm going to provide you with a few more tips and habits that will help you strengthen your self-discipline even more. If you've ever read any psychology books in the past, you would know that a lot of what a person does every day is very habit-driven. You might even know from your own experience, that some people don't like to stray away from their habits and routines. This means that if a person develops the right habits, they would be able to have stronger self-discipline without feeling like they are draining their willpower. People tend to lose self-discipline when they feel like their willpower has been drained and they can no longer resist the temptations in their lives.

So, where do habits come from and how are they developed? Why is it that when many people try to change their habits by breaking the bad ones or building good ones that they only stick with it for a certain amount of time before they give up and go back to their old ways? The biggest problem here, especially with habits that people have had for many years or even decades, are the neural pathways that have been imprinted into people's brains. This happens on a biological level. These neural pathways are responsible for linking up the neural networks in a person's brain to perform a specific function like preparing a cup of coffee in a

certain way, walking up the stairs, or smoking a cigarette.

These neural Pathways help a person automate behavior that is constantly used in an effort to reduce the energy needed for the conscious processing power in a person's brain. By doing this, it allows a person's mind to focus on other things rather than the habitual tasks that they have done a thousand times. This function actually stems from our early days as humans and his part of our DNA; it allows humans to have a more efficient mind that can be used for other things rather than mundane things.

In this case, it's normally the mundane behaviors that are often repeated, which hold people back from building good habits in most cases. People tend to have more bad habits that are adding negative value to their lives rather than good habits that help them achieve their goals further. Since the cause of this is the neural pathways that get ingrained deeper and deeper over time, it makes it harder for people to break their bad habits or even form good ones when all of the bad ones are constantly getting in the way. However, if you can try to ingrain the next following habits we will be discussing into your life, you will find that strengthening your self-discipline may become easier. Again, these things don't happen overnight. Remember that habits take lots of time to form and even to break. If you start small and take baby steps, and build, you will stop thinking about how much longer you can discipline yourself since you will have ingrained those habits into your brain which then automatically promotes the self-discipline that you seek.

Habit #1: Gratitude

Gratitude is an important action in human life that helps not only people with self-discipline but is often used to help people that are facing self-esteem and self-confidence issues. A huge problem in our modern world today is that we are constantly presented with millions of materialistic things that cause us to always be wanting something more or something else. This causes people to spend too much time thinking about all the things that they want, and not enough time thinking about the things that they already have. Building a habit of gratitude

helps people move away from constantly wanting the things that they don't have and move forward towards appreciating the things that they do have. When people do this, they can begin to make remarkable changes in their lives.

The effects of practicing and showcasing gratitude are extremely crucial. It does everything from improving mental health, emotional well-being, a person's spirituality, gratitude is capable of so many things. Practicing gratitude is an exercise that is constantly used in therapy to help the client move away from thinking about things that aren't in the present and focus on being mindful. Most importantly, gratitude helps people move away towards a state of abundance and away from a state of lack. When people live in a state of lack, it makes it impossible for them to focus on achieving their goals and being self-disciplined. They spend too much of their mental energy and capacity worrying about the things that they don't have or living in a fearful way, to the point that they forget about the things that they do have.

The state of lack can also show up in someone as physical symptoms. This state produces a lot of stress because the brain automatically releases cortisol and epinephrine, which are the stress hormones from our brains. These hormones impact numerous systems within the human body. When someone is stressed, their immune systems, digestive systems, and reproductive systems are all affected. We must spend a few minutes every day writing down all the things that we are grateful for. Even if you feel like you don't have anything to be grateful for, try hard to find something. It doesn't have to be anything large like winning the lottery or finding $20 on the ground. It could be something very simple like the nice weather, the nice conversation that you had with your barista, or even just seeing a cute dog on your way home.

Habit #2: Forgiveness

If you are someone living a fast-paced life, how often do you find yourself feeling angry, frustrated, or annoyed? Due to the insane amount of convenience we are offered in our daily lives, simple annoyances that happen in a person's day can cause a spiral of negative emotions. For example, if you are in a hurry to

get to work and you happen to be running late that day, the coffee shop that you normally stop at to get your morning coffee is taking forever to make your order. When you finally get your coffee, you realize that they had made your order wrong but now you have no time to get it fixed. That one simple human error has spent you into a spiral of anger and annoyance, and you struggle to let go of it and you find that it is still negatively impacting your whole day. This causes you to have spent most of your energy upset about the coffee shop that wronged you and you don’t have enough mental capacity to focus on other things like practicing your self-discipline. When people spend most of their days feeling the emotions of anger, regret, or guilt, they actually are creating more problems than they are with solutions. The emotions of anger and hate consume much more energy in a person's body compared to positive emotions like forgiveness and love. Forgiveness is something that can be learned. When people learn to forgive, only then will they be able to let go of certain things.

Without learning the habit of forgiveness, people would simply not be able to achieve self-discipline. When a person is too worried about how someone or something has wronged them, it makes it impossible for them to focus on achieving their goals or on their personal discipline. If someone has hurt you in the past, learn to forgive them. It doesn't mean that you have to forget about what they did to you altogether. Simply just forgive and let go of that negative energy and give it back to the universe rather than keeping it within your body. When we perform the act of forgiveness, we are actually letting go of the negative energy that inhibits our ability to practice self-discipline. If you want to master self-discipline, you have to get rid of sources that are sucking away at your mental energy. Holding on to negative emotions like anger is a sure way for your energy to be drained. While forgiveness might not seem like a discipline habit when you first look at it, it is an extremely crucial one to build in the process.

Try to think about the people or situations that you are currently angry with. It could be someone that you think has wronged you recently, or simply just an annoying situation that has happened to you. Instead of just thinking about how it made you feel, try to put yourself in their shoes. What would be the things that

you would do if you were in their situation? Make it light-hearted and try to find some humor in it. Rather than thinking about it as a situation that shouldn't have happened, try to find a lesson learned in those situations. I know that it is very hard to forgive certain people, especially if they have really hurt you or wronged you in life. However, it isn't until people are able to let go of those feelings of animosity and hurt before things in their life really began to improve. People are often so busy stressing and worrying that they don't spend enough time thinking about how they are going to change their future.

Habit #3: Meditation

Just like gratitude, meditation is a commonly used technique to help people practice mindfulness in cases where they are suffering from an anxiety disorder or depression disorder. Meditation is something that can be used to help put people's minds at ease. Provide people with a spiritual centeredness that can be used as an avenue of growth. When people meditate, they take their awareness away from things of the past and the future and focus it on the things of the present. When this happens, they are able to connect themselves to the universe, which also helps them with increasing gratitude.

In the later chapters of this book, we will learn the specific ways of how meditation can help a person improve their self-discipline. Meditation actually plays a big role in a person's ability to use their willpower. Its function is to clear the mind of any thoughts and simply focus all attention on the present. From a self-discipline perspective, meditation helps set the right tone for a person's day. In addition, it helps people improve their physical, emotional, and mental health all at once, allowing them to gain some of the biggest benefits for the least amount of time invested.

There are many types of meditation, some of which focuses on mindfulness and some of which focuses on love and gratitude. There truly are too many different types of meditation for humankind to keep track of, but the most popular and beneficial type that is used amongst many therapies and within self-discipline is mindfulness meditation. Contrary to common belief, meditation doesn't have to

take a long time. It can be done in 10 to 15 minutes. However, the hardest part of meditation is actually bringing yourself to do it. A person has to be able to keep their mind still and train it to stop wandering all the time. The trick behind mindfulness meditation is not to stop wandering thoughts altogether, but simply to acknowledge these thoughts and reroute yourself back to the present. There are many types of breathing techniques that can be accompanied with meditation to help with achieving mindfulness. We will be diving deeper into these techniques in the meditation chapter.

Some people believe that meditation is about aligning the physical human body with its spiritual body. However, for the purpose of this book, we will stay away from spirituality and focus more on the practical benefit that being mindful can bring.

Habit #4: Active Goal Setting

We have mentioned this briefly in the previous chapter, but it is important enough that we will mention it again. We learned in the previous chapter that setting attainable goals is more effective than setting Broad and large goals. by setting smaller goals, it becomes something that is more quantifiable, and because of this, you can easily keep track of how you are doing when it comes to goal achievement.

Active goal setting is very different from passive goal-setting. Passive goal setting means you are setting goals in your mind, and they are passive because they lack many details are planning. Passive goal-setting means that a person hasn't properly defined the actual goal, which makes it hard for them to keep track of their progress and knowing what needs to be done in order to achieve that goal. Active goal setting is the complete opposite of passive goal-setting. Active goal setting means writing out these goals and making sure that they have an important meeting. These goals have to be measurable and very specific. To successfully have an active goal, a person has to make a plan towards achieving it. this is why people set long-term goals, but also engage in smaller goals on a daily basis in order to work towards achieving the bigger goal.

By using active goal-setting, it ingrains the discipline in us because you are forced to give it direction. By breaking down your big goals into smaller daily goals, it helps people avoid distractions by only looking at the things that they need to get done in the present day. This way, a person isn't left constantly thinking about one large intimidating goal but not knowing how to approach it.

Active goal setting works by taking the first step in setting your long-term goals. If you are someone that has long-term goals like; wanting to own your first home, wanting to pay off your student debt by the next three years, or wanting to take 6 months off to travel Europe. If you are someone that has long-term goals, then you need to actively participate in daily, weekly, and monthly goal setting and planning. You have to play an active role in tracking your progress towards your goals and making changes in places where you feel like aren’t working for you.

So take out a pen and a piece of paper, and start writing down what long-term goals you have. Once you have some long-term goals written down, break it down into monthly, weekly, and daily goals. Start slowly by accomplishing your daily goals and when you reach the end of the month, assess to see if you have achieved your monthly goal through accomplishing your daily goals. If you haven't, look back on your daily goals and see if there's anything you can change so that you could achieve next month’s goal.

Habit #5: Eat Healthy

We also discussed the benefits of eating healthy in the previous chapter, but we will expand on it a little bit more here. What a lot of people don't realize is that our human body spends a huge portion of its energy digesting and processing food. When a person's diet is rich in proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, their body is actually using more energy to process food which some of it is useless to us.

Raw fruits and foods actually offer the biggest boost of energy for humans because they require less energy for the body to process and provides more energy for the body to use after that. This process is called an enhanced Thermic

Effect of Food (TEF) or otherwise known as Dietary Induced Thermogenesis (DIT).

Like we learned in the previous chapter, our brains use up a large amount of glucose in order to keep it functioning. Therefore, the amount of energy that a person has is very responsible and how focussed they feel. When a person is focussed, they can achieve their goals using less willpower than if they weren't focused. When a person is feeling too comatose from the unhealthy food that they have eaten, staying focused is something that is very hard to achieve. They often spend too much of their time feeling too sluggish and tired to work on achieving their goals.

You commonly hear that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. However, it's important not only to eat a healthy breakfast but to eat multiple healthy meals throughout the day. In order to do this, you have to actively plan what you're going to eat during these meals in order to break some of your bad habits. For example, if you are planning to eat five healthy smaller-sized meals per day, but you haven't prepared any of those meals, you are more likely to feel hungry and indulge in unhealthy conveniences like fast food. If you are someone that eats fast food or processed foods often, your body won't be able to create enough energy to help you approach your goals with focus or help you have the willpower in order to start working at them.

Since the food that a person eats can change the neural chemical makeup of their brain, it also heavily influences a person's mind and body connection. Take a look at the things that you eat during your day. Try to find the meals where you often indulge in unhealthy food or junk food. Plan in advance so you can substitute those meals with raw, organic, and healthy foods. By buying this type of healthy food in advance and preparing it for the times that you become hungry, you will be less likely to visit your nearest McDonalds.

Habit #6: Sleep

Since the theory behind willpower is that it gets its energy from the brain, which

gets its energy from glucose levels and rest, then it's safe to assume that sleep is directly connected to how the brain is able to acquire energy. When a person doesn't get enough sleep, their brain spends most of its energy focused on just keeping your basic body functions up and going. This does not leave much energy for a person to spend on exerting their willpower, practicing self-discipline, or even simply just remembering their self-discipline. Getting the proper and healthy amount of sleep is a vital requirement for accomplishing anything. When a person doesn't get enough sleep, it affects their ability to focus, their judgment, their mood, their overall health, and their diet.

When people suffer chronic sleep deprivation, such as insomnia, things go from bad to worse. Many research studies have found evidence that people who don't get the proper amount of sleep on a regular basis have a greater risk of catching specific diseases. Lack of sleep also has a significant and negative impact on a person's immune system. This can cause a person to frequently catch colds or flus that cause them to not have the ability to go to school, work, or get anything effective done.

For an adult, it is important to get at least six hours of sleep every night. A healthy amount of sleep should range between eight to ten hours every night, but the minimum amount is 6 hours. Avoid eating or drinking anything that contains caffeine at least 5 hours before your bedtime so that it doesn't affect your natural sleep cycle. Make note to also stay away from ingesting too many toxins during the day such as cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, or prescription medicine if it can be avoided.

In conclusion, the benefits of getting enough sleep are extraordinary. Aside from the fact that it can help you stay focused and be more disciplined, it also helps you curb inflammation and pain, lower stress, improve your memory, jumpstart your creativity, sharpens your attention, improves your grades, limits your chances for accidents and helps you avoid depression.

Habit #7: Exercise

Exercise is one of the most important habits to build within all people. It acts as a cornerstone habit to help a person's life be filled with positive habits and be rid of the bad ones. A person that is truly able to discipline themselves has to instill the habit of exercise into their everyday routine. As you all may already know, there are endless benefits when it comes to exercise. This is something that is talked about not only by psychologists but medical experts as well. Even though exercise is such an important component of a person's life, not everyone actually makes it a priority. Why is this?

In our busy modern-day lives, everyone is caught up with trying to get all the things that they need to get done and are often busy running around completing errands and fail to simply tackle exercise head-on. Often, people have a bad mindset when it comes to exercise and think that they won't be able to build it as a habit because they simply have “too many other things to do.” This is where most people are wrong. There are ways to incorporate exercise even if their day is jam-packed from beginning to end.

When people think of exercise, they may automatically think of a minimum one hour intense weight-lifting session at the gym, a one-hour long, expensive spin class, or a one-hour yoga class. If that's what they are thinking about then yes, it is true that the people that have busy lives may not be able to incorporate the time to get to their exercise class, the time it takes to complete the exercise class, and then get to wherever they need to go after that. However, exercise doesn't necessarily have to be a formalized session that takes a long time. It can simply be getting some sit-ups, push-ups, or some jumping jacks in the morning before you head to work. It can also be you choosing to walk to work instead of taking the bus, or it could be a brief walk around your neighborhood park after dinner.

By instilling exercise as a keystone habit of your life, it can help you become more disciplined and can also improve your life in numerous ways. First of all, exercise is extremely effective in reducing stress levels and pain because it causes the brain to release feel-good endorphins and neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. Secondly, exercise helps increase the oxygenation and

blood flow of body cells, which is responsible for helping boost the immune system and fighting off diseases. Lastly, exercise increases a person's ability to focus on the task at hand due to the increased activity in the brain which allows us to live a more disciplined life.

So start building the habit of exercise in your life by simply just going for a 10-minute walk or just doing some sit-ups and push-ups right after you wake up. Just a few minutes is fine. Try to do this for one week and then increase the amount of time you spend on that session for the next week. Keep up with this pattern, and soon enough, you will have a healthy amount of time every day that you set aside to get your exercise in, and this is when it will become a full-blown habit.

Habit #8: Organization

Have you ever noticed that when your home is messy, it makes it very hard to be comfortable and therefore leads you to be unfocused and distracted? Naturally, humans don't like living in a dirty and messy environment. In order for a person to achieve their goals and accomplish self-discipline, they need to be organized. Organization also needs to become a habit that is fully incorporated in a person's personal life and professional life. This includes the physical act of organizing the things you have in your home and the mental act of organizing the things on your mind.

By living an organized life, you are living a disciplined life. If you are someone who is constantly scattered and disorganized, start small with your organization skills. Just pick one small space each day for yourself to organize. This can be just one single drawer in your kitchen, the things lying around on your desk, or just straighten out the things on your coffee table. The next day, pick something else to organize like your bathroom drawers or the clothes in your closet. The more time you spend living in a clean and organized environment, the less you would want your home to become cluttered and messy again. You will start to begin to notice when clutter builds up and by having a habit of organization, you will immediately organize things as you use them so you don't have to spend

time organizing it later on.

By decluttering your home or your working environment, you will have plenty of different areas where you can sit down and work on your own goals. Has your home ever been so cluttered that when you do have the motivation to start working on something, you simply just don't have the space to do it? In order to avoid this, keep your home clean and organized at all times so that when you have a rush of motivation, you can find a workspace that is clean and ready for you to work.

Like a lot of other habits, the habit of organization can be learned and built over time. It does require your attention and effort, but it is something that will pay off tremendously in the long run. When you are living in a physical space that is organized and clean, your mind will automatically become more stress-free, relaxed, and give you the ability to focus. In turn, by becoming more organized, you are increasing your ability to be more self-disciplined. Begin to incorporate this good habit of putting things back where it belongs when you're finished using it rather than leaving it out. Little things like this we do on a daily basis have the largest impact on the quality of life. Pay attention to the small things and you'll begin to see big benefits.

Habit #9: Time Management

In the busy world that we live in today, time management is extremely crucial if you are trying to get everything that you need to get done. An average person has to work 40 hours a week, not including the time it takes for them to commute to work, and still have to make time for things like exercise, relationships, socializing, family, and achieving the goals that they have set. Without good time management, it will be virtually impossible for anyone to get anything done unless they are able to manage their time effectively.

When people are able to properly manage their time, they will begin to have room to do the things that actually matter. Mainly, they must make room to do the activities that they need in order to achieve the goals that they have set. In

order for a person to achieve their long-term goals, they have to break it down into smaller daily goals that may not be the most urgent but are definitely still very important. If a person does not have good time management, they likely cannot even get the most urgent things that they need to get done in a day, let alone achieving goals that don’t require immediate urgency.

To effectively measure if certain things are urgent, non-urgent, important, not important, you need to take a second to think about whether or not the action that you are doing is not ‘urgent but important’ or ‘not urgent and not important’ or ‘urgent and important.’ The things that fall into the ‘not urgent and not important’ category are known as things that are time-wasters. This includes things like browsing social media on your phone or binge-watching your favorite Netflix series. Things that fall into the category of ‘not urgent but important’ are likely the short-term goals you have set for yourself. Although they don't need to be urgently completed, they are still important for your self-growth. Things that are urgent and important are likely deadlines or any responsibilities that you have to complete for your work.

A person's ability to strengthen self-discipline is derived from their ability to manage their time. Some of the most successful people in the world are incredible time managers because rather than using time as a detractor, they use time as a benefit. Everybody has the same amount of time in a day; we shouldn't waste it. Start managing your time by categorizing the things you need to do in a day with the categories I gave you above. Start by doing the things that are both urgent and important then move on to the things that are non-urgent but important. Leave the things that are both not urgent or important to the end of the day when you have completed all the other things. This way, you are maximizing your time to get the things that you need to get completed.

Habit #10: Persistence

This last habit you probably saw coming. No amount of self-discipline would ever be complete without the presence of persistence. Persistence is a type of habit that helps us to not give up even when we are faced with failure.

Persistence is what helps us get back up on our feet to keep trying even when we do fail. Persistence plays such a huge role in self-discipline that without it, achieving self-discipline is probably impossible.

You might be wondering why that is. This is because achieving our goals is not an easy thing to do. It is really hard. Getting discouraged is easy and something that happens to everyone along their journey. In addition, giving up takes far less energy and effort compared to continuing to push through even if it's something that causes a lot of pain in the process before it can give us any pleasure.

However, this hardship that is required to achieve any goals is simply something that you have to persevere through because that's just what it takes. We all have to realize that even the most successful people in the world have failed numerous times over and over again. Failure is simply a part of life, and rather than avoiding it and not pursuing your goals at all in fear of failure, we should learn to persevere and push through even during the hardest of times. Without fail, we wouldn't be able to achieve the big goals that we have set for ourselves.

There are many ways that a person can go about instilling perseverance as a habit, but the best and most effective weight is to come up with the reasons why you want to do the things in life that you aim for. If the reasons behind your goals are strong enough, they can motivate you so you can get through anything.

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO DISCIPLINE YOURSELF

THE BEST WAY to not fall into temptations whilst using your self-discipline is to avoid temptation in the first place. Figuring out what your weaknesses and temptations are is crucial in maintaining self-discipline, as we have mentioned numerous times throughout the book. Procrastination is probably the biggest enemy to self-discipline and learning about how procrastination works is important in being able to discipline yourself. Let's take a look at the science behind procrastination and how we can use this information to remove all possible obstacles to maintain discipline.

The Science Behind Procrastination

Through an abundance of psychology research, psychologists have discovered a phenomenon called "time inconsistency," which helps explain why procrastination affects humans so largely by pulling us away from needed tasks despite our good intentions. The term time inconsistency refers to the habit of the human mind to value immediate gratification or rewards more highly compared to long-term and future rewards. The best way to further understand this is to imagine that you have two alter egos. The first is your present self, and the second is your future self. When a person sets goals for themselves, such as getting fit by working out more or learning a new language, they are actually making plans for their future self. They are envisioning what they want their life to be like in the future. Evidence has shown researchers that when a person thinks about their future self, it is not difficult for their brain to see the value of

doing actions that will lead to long-term benefits. The future self is the one that values long-term rewards.

On the contrary, while the future self can only set goals, the present self is the one that is responsible for taking action. There will come a time where this individual will need to make a decision, but they aren't making a choice for the future self at this point. In the present moment, their brain is focused entirely on the present self. Research shows that the present self prefers immediate rewards over long-term ones. This means that the present self and future self don't often get along. While the future self wants to be healthy and have a sic pack, the present self wants some chili cheese fries. Everyone knows that eating unhealthy will prevent health problems in the future when you're at an old age, but those things are so far away, so why worry about them now right? This is the thought process that many people have when they are faced with a choice of immediate gratification or achieving long-term goals.

Very similarly, most young people know that saving money for their retirement during their 20s and 30s is extremely valuable, but the benefit of this is many decades away. It is much easier for a person's present-self to see value in buying themselves a new iPhone rather than putting away $1000 for their 75 year old self! This concept of "time inconsistency" may be the reason why people often go to bed feeling motivated and inspired to reach their goals and change their life but they find themselves completely falling back into bad habits when they wake up. This is due to the fact that the human brain values long-term benefits when they are thinking about the future, but it prefers immediate gratification when it comes to the present moment. Let's dive into a little bit more of the science behind this.

For the sake of example here, let's pretend for a little while that you are a giraffe living in the plains of the African savanna. Your neck is 6 feet long and occasionally, you will see a group of human tourists driving in a car with a safari tour taking pictures of you. However, it's not just your long neck that separates you from the humans. It could be that the biggest difference between you and

your other giraffe friends and the humans taking pictures is that almost every single decision that you make brings an immediate benefit to your life. For example, when you see a storm coming, you will find shelter under a tree or if you are hungry, you walk over to the nearest tree and begin to eat, or when you spot a predator hunting you, you begin to run away.

Every day, most of the choices that you make as a giraffe, such as where to sleep, when to avoid a predator or what to eat, make a direct and immediate impact on your life. You are entirely focused on the present and the furthest you would think about is the near future. You are living in an ‘Immediate-Return Environment,’ this is what scientists call this environment due to the fact that your actions deliver very immediate and clear outcomes.

Now let’s change things up and pretend that you are one of the human tourists that are traveling in Africa on the safari. Different from giraffes, humans live in a ‘Delayed Return Environment.’ Most of the choices made in this type of environment will not benefit you right away. For example, if you save your money now, you’ll have enough for retirement in forty years or if you work hard at your job today, you will get paid in two weeks. Rewards are designed to be delayed until some point in the future in many aspects of modern day society.

While the giraffe is worried about problems that are immediate, such as avoiding predators, seeking shelters, and finding food, humans worry the most about the problems of the future. For instance, while the humans are on the safari, they may be thinking, “This trip and safari has been tremendous fun! It would be so awesome if I could work as a safari tour guide and be able to see the giraffes every day. Speaking of work, is it time for me to change my career? Am I really working the kind of job that I enjoy? Should I start looking for new jobs?” Unfortunately for us, humans that are living in a Delayed Return Environment tend to lead to a lot of anxiety and stress. This is because the human brain wasn’t designed to solve problems of a Delayed Return Environment. In fact, this is why there has been a rise in depression and anxiety over the last decade. Where people of the past focused more on their immediate problem like harvesting their

crops for food or boiling water so it's safe to drink, people nowadays focus on problems that are in the future since most of our basic needs are already taken care of.

Reasons Why People Procrastinate

So now that we know that all of life in a Delayed Return Environment, let's learn a little about why people procrastinate. Most people are more than capable of achieving great things in their life, but many fail to do so. Procrastination is probably one of the biggest obstacles that hinder a person from being able to achieve greater things. Everyone has procrastinated before and anyone is capable of it. Many times, people don't even know that they are procrastinating. However, there are also those moments where people know that they are procrastinating but fail to do anything to stop the process. So why do people procrastinate anyways although they are self-aware? There are numerous reasons why people begin procrastinating; let's take a look at the most common ones:

1. Skill Deficiency

In order for a person to achieve their goals, it requires them to learn and to have personal growth. People will have to develop new skills and knowledge related to their set goals. This is a huge part of their journey. However, people often fail to see this fact. They see their lack of skill or knowledge as an obstacle that is permanent and cannot be overcome. This mindset causes people to give up on their goals before they have even done anything to start it. Rather than giving up, people need to be able to assess the skills and knowledge that are required to achieve their goal and then compare it to their own skills and knowledge that they possess. The difference between the two is nothing more than just an opportunity to learn and train. Instead of just giving up, people need to create a plan that will help them develop and learn the skills needed in order to bridge that gap. So is it procrastination if you are pushing the date of your goal achievement back? Absolutely not. This is just effective planning. By understanding that you require more time to reach your goal means that you are

identifying the right steps, you need to take to reach your goal.

1. Lack of interest

Everyone has their own special set of interests. Just because your friend is passionate about a particular topic or job, it does not mean that everyone else is interested in the same thing. People have the tendency to put off doing jobs that they do not find interesting because it is more difficult to find motivation. There are multiple ways that people can deal with jobs that they have no interest in depending on if you are the person that is actually doing the job or if they are the person that is simply assigning the task. Let's take a look at the perspective of a person that is physically doing the job; they could try the following things:

- Check to see if this task actually has to be done
- Ask yourself if there is someone else who is much better suited to completing this task. If possible, you may be able to swap it or delegate it (e.g., if someone else likes that job better, you can trade with them for it and you might like the other better)
- If your tolerance for frustration is low, try to break down this job into smaller pieces and complete them one at a time
- If your tolerance for frustration is higher, you can schedule a block of time where you take away all distractions and just do this task until it is done

From the perspective of the person who is assigning the job/task, you will likely find more success if you assign this specific task to someone who you know will be passionate about it. By choosing someone who has an interest in that task, the job will be completed in a much faster fashion and at a higher standard as well.

1. Lack of motivation

People often have the wrong mindset where they think that they need to feel

fully motivated before they start working on a task/job. This mindset is unrealistic. People's motivation often does not arrive until they have started that task and is beginning to see progress. When people see progress, they start to see the fruits to their labor, and they become even more motivated to keep working until they have completed their task. You might be wondering what about the motivation that is needed in order to start working altogether? The answer to this is that a person needs to have a good understanding of the 'why' and the vision of that particular job. Before you even begin working on it, you should know what the benefits are going to be. You would be surprised at how many people waste a lot of time doing work that actually does not need to be completed. Moreover, people should be using prioritization in order to get the most urgent and important work out of the way first. By understanding the benefits of completing a task or job, you will fully be able to estimate its importance. In terms of smaller tasks/jobs, simply understanding what the benefits are of completing that task should be enough for motivation. For larger tasks and jobs, it is important that you have a way to measure your progress so you can further gain motivation and confidence from your work.

1. Fear of failure

There are a lot of people who have the belief that failure is devastating. They often see failure as a final result that is set in stone and cannot be rectified or changed. Failure to them is a permanent stain on their reputation, which means that every time that they fail, their ego takes a huge hit. This lack of confidence causes them to avoid taking action on tasks where they are not 100% absolutely confident in its success. Keep in mind that in the era that we live in today, many tasks that people face will be new to them and it is entirely impossible to be able to be 100% confident in every single chance of success. Due to this, procrastination is something that happens frequently and in an endless spiral.

On the contrary, there are the people out there who see failure as a stepping stone towards success and a learning opportunity. They have the understanding and

belief that mistakes are unavoidable, and they will be made. Their attitude consists mostly of realistic optimism which enables them to believe that they will be able to successfully achieve their goal/task even if it's something that requires more than one try. As you might be able to tell, these types of people have a much lower tendency to procrastinate. Instead, they often approach new challenges with excitement and preparedness to deal with obstacles.

Since learning and growth are important parts of a successful life, it is unrealistic to believe that you can succeed without experiencing any obstacles or failures in your journey. If you are constantly worrying and are scared at the idea of failure, try to identify extra steps or measures that you can take in order to lower the chances of failure and increase the chances of success. Factor in time that you can take to review and assess your own actions and try to learn something from every experience. You will soon start to change your mindset into one where you see every challenge as an opportunity for learning and growth.

1. Fear of success

Many professionals of the self-help industry have talked or theorized about the fact that people's biggest fear wasn't necessarily failure, but our biggest fear is actually the fear of success. Many people view success as stress and pressure. When they think about achieving greater and more things, they often think about the negative aspects that come with it. For example, they believe that when a person achieves more, people will begin to demand and expect more from you. They often doubt their ability to deal with the increased expectations so they decide to procrastinate to sabotage their own chances of success.

The reality here is that there is no reason that a person should fear success. As a person begins to succeed by overcoming challenges of all difficulties, they begin to become more knowledgeable and have developed new skills. Their resilience will begin to increase. If a person is able to learn the necessary skills of personal organization, it really doesn't matter what type of task or work that they are doing, they will be able to find a way through. Long story short, every task is

simply just a task that needs to be completed. When you are able to break down every large task into a number of smaller tasks, there should be nothing that would be able to overwhelm you.

1. Resistance

You might have experienced this phenomenon before, where there are times that it would be easier for you to just complete a task than procrastinate but yet you still chose to procrastinate! The main reason for this is rebellion. There is a class of procrastinators called the ‘rebellious procrastinators’; they are very common. These people deliberately delay tasks, defy standards, falter expectations and impedes protocol. This type of procrastination can be done by anyone especially if they feel like they have been mistreated.

The reasons that cause people to procrastinate are different for every individual. The exact reason why each individual may not be obvious, but the obvious reasons may be caused by something that is underlying. On the contrary, the reasons that we had just discussed are seen as the most common ones. Trying to avoid this type of behavior is not an easy task as it often involves a person to identify their bad habits and actively try to break them down and create new ones. Whether you are the procrastinator or you are suffering at the hands of one, the important part here is to take action immediately. You have to take action in order to correct your situation. Keep in mind that procrastination is a serious issue that, if left unresolved for a long time, can cause some serious and long lasting problems in your life.

Myths and Assumptions Regarding Procrastination

Let’s begin to learn about some of the most common myths and assumptions regarding procrastination. By learning about what these are, we can get those false ideas out of our mind and focus on facts. There are numerous myths and excuses that people tell themselves in order to avoid work that needs to be done. In fact, so many excuses that we will have a whole chapter dedicated to talking

about this later on in the book. Below are four of the most common myths regarding procrastination.

1. “I work better under pressure.”

Think about this for a second; imagine that you have an important work report that is due to your boss in two weeks. Instead of starting the report, you find yourself doing other unnecessary things like reorganizing your stamp collection or cleaning your bathtub. In order to reduce the disagreement between what you should be doing and what you are actually doing, you start to rationalize your behavior. You begin telling yourself that you are just the type of person who works better ‘under pressure’ so the best thing that you can do for yourself is to delay the start of your report.

The hard reality here is that procrastination is actually harmful to a person’s performance. Last minute scrambling around to get tasks and jobs done or cramming the night before a final exam is not efficient or enjoyable. When people plan and pace their projects, it typically gets them better results, and it is a whole lot less stressful than pulling all-nighters to get things done. If you are someone who is absolutely convinced that they can’t start working on a task unless you are feeling the pressure of a close deadline, then you can try to fix this habit by creating artificial pressure fo yourself. There are a few ways that you can approach this technique. For instance, you can set a 30-minute timer and tell yourself that you only have 30 minutes to write the opening paragraph of your report. You can convince yourself that the report that you have to write is timed and that at the end of the 30-minute timer, you have to stop writing. You could also try asking a friend to be your ‘accountability buddy’ who is someone that you have to ‘hand in’ your work to.

1. “I need to be inspired or feeling motivated before I can begin working.”

People often put off doing certain tasks until they’re ‘in the mood’ or ‘feeling

inspired.’ By telling yourself that you are waiting for a certain emotion to come is really just procrastination in disguise. Rather than waiting for a certain emotion to come before getting started on your task/work, you need to tell yourself that this work needs to be done regardless of how much or little inspiration you feel. By doing this, you will find that inspiration is a product of discipline. When you begin to start working on the task that you’ve set, you will start feeling fulfilled which then leads to actual inspiration. Simply just stop wasting time waiting for the feeling of inspiration to hit you. Just like Picasso once said, “Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working.”

1. “I need to have at least 3 – 4 hours of uninterrupted time to work on this.”

People often believe in the myth that they need a certain huge chunk of uninterrupted time to be able to accomplish whatever they are looking to accomplish. However, if a person doesn’t have that a long chunk of time to work on their task, such as that report that’s due in two weeks, then they are making a mistake by delaying their task until they find themselves with a few hours of uninterrupted time. Rather than doing this, you should try to apply a technique called the “Swiss Cheese Approach.” Since Swiss cheese is a type of cheese that is famous for its numerous holes, the Swiss cheese approach means that is very possible for a person to get something that starts in just 5 minutes or less. Once a person has started, they have actually opened up their own opportunity to keep it going.

The Swiss Cheese Approach is made of the following elements:

- Try working in small ‘holes’ of time. Try getting some work done in just 15, 20, or 30 minutes.
- Work away at large tasks by poking small ‘holes’ consistently.

This approach is efficient because of these reasons:

- Once you actually start working on a task, it no longer feels as overwhelming or difficult as it did before you actually started.
- By poking small ‘holes’ in a task that you’re doing, you’ll be making small but constant progress.
- This approach will help you build a sense of ‘forward momentum,’ once you start, you are motivated to keep doing more.
- Each time that you complete a small amount of the task that needs to be done, it will give you a sense of accomplishment.
- You are making good use of small portions of time rather than wasting it completely.

The next time you find yourself with only 15 – 20 minutes of time to work on your task/project, rather than telling yourself that you don’t have enough time or waiting until you have a longer time block, ask yourself these questions below:

- “Is there a small ‘hole’ in this project that I can start with?”
- “How can I use this time to poke a small ‘hole’ in my task?”
- “What can I get done in 10 – 15 minutes?”

By continuing to poke ‘holes’ into your tasks and projects whenever you find yourself with some time to spare, you will be surprised to find that you have accomplished a lot of your task.

1. “I’ll be able to do this job better tomorrow.”

Everyone has the tendency to believe that things will be different in the future, even if the ‘future’ means tomorrow. The mindset is often, “In the future, I’ll have more time and be better organized. In the future, I’ll have more energy and be more well rested so I can get things done.” Due to this, people often pass over their present-day responsibilities over to their future selves not knowing that they probably won’t be that much different from now. Here are a few items that you need to consider; firstly, unless you actively start taking action needed to be

more effective and productive right now, you'll be in the exact same situation tomorrow. Second, unless you are doing the necessary actions to increase your discipline in the present moment, you will be just as undisciplined tomorrow. Lastly, unless you are taking steps to become more organized right now, you will be at the same level of disorganization tomorrow. All of this can be summarized in just one sentence; don't put off things for tomorrow that you can do today.

Almost all of us have at least truly believed in one of those four myths as a way to be excused from completing tasks/work that didn't make us feel comfortable. It could be because we have a fear of doing a bad job, or that task seemed too complex, or we were feeling overwhelmed, or simply just because there was something else 'better' to do.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON DEVELOPING SELF-DISCIPLINE

IN THIS CHAPTER, we will focus on learning some of the challenges that come with strengthening your self-discipline. We already know that hardship and failure are a part of the process of life and the process of building self-discipline. By understanding what these challenges might be in advance, it gives you an idea of what to prepare for when you are faced with an obstacle. Like we mentioned earlier in this book, having a plan prepared when you are in the face of a challenge or temptation can help you react in a way that is good rather than in a way that negatively affects your progress.

One problem that people normally face when they are trying to strengthen their self-discipline is falling into a self-defeating loop. It looks like this: Fail to engage in desired behavior > negative/physical/psychological consequences > low mood, shame and self-criticism > low motivation to engage in healthy behaviors. In this chapter, I will be addressing a few challenges that are most commonly experienced when a person is looking to practice their self-discipline.

Fighting Against 'Natural' Tendencies

Often times, people feel like their natural state should be to sit on their couch, with a plethora of snacks, and watching their favorite TV show. During those days, the idea of going to the gym or even just eating a healthy meal seems to be totally absurd. It is interesting that people nowadays have been conditioned by the expectations of society to think that their natural state is lazy. We live in a

world where if you are not constantly on-the-go or working your butt off at work, then you are not working hard enough. The result of these feelings is that people tend to get trapped thinking that practicing self-discipline is the constant battle of fighting against a person's natural state. Their mindset is one that is a psychological battle of laziness versus self-discipline. Having this type of mindset makes it difficult to practice self-discipline.

One of the reasons that I suspect behind this mindset is the fact that people tend to mistake the need for rest as being lazy. Lots of mental or physical exertion creates fatigue in the human body. Rest is a recovery process so that the person can not only get stronger but also be able to repeat and exceed that mental and physical exertion. If your mindset regarding self-discipline is one that is constant and uninterrupted work, then you deny your body's natural need for recovery and rest. This need for recovery will show itself as a type of sabotage of your self-discipline efforts, and you will automatically label it as being lazy. Be careful when this happens, as this label is very incorrect.

Rather than mistaking any urges of rest as a sign of being lazy, think about whether or not you have exerted yourself already. If so, it is all right to stop what you're doing and take a quick break to recharge. Getting into the mindset that you are lazy, or that resting is for lazy people, then you will always feel negative about yourself every time your body shows you a natural symptom when it is asking you to rest.

The World Doesn’t Care About Your Attempts at Self-Discipline

When a person makes a decision to actively and purposefully restructure their life and behavior, the universe doesn't just magically make things easier for them. On the contrary, it will likely throw many challenges at you. It may rain the day that you decide to go out for a run, or your coworker might buy you a whole box of chocolates just to be nice on the day that you decide to eat healthy.

Since the world isn't built on fairness or justice or reward, it is silly to think that the universe will consciously support the changes that you are trying to make in

your life. There are people who claim that the universe is presenting opportunities to them when they have decided to change their life. This is inaccurate because if a person is looking to change their life, they likely have taken on new activities. By being exposed to new people and new information, this is what creates new opportunities that have nothing to do with the universe trying to help you. So don't spend time thinking about whether or not your self-discipline plan is something that the universe will help you with. Spend your time instead of preparing for all the obstacles that will get in your way of achieving your goals. If you do run into obstacles, which you will, don't think that they were placed there deliberately to throw you off but they were already there in the first place.

Difficulty Breaking Well-Worn Emotional Behavior Pathways

One of the most well-known concepts in Psychology is that the emotions that people feel are very powerful influences on their behavior. These emotions and feelings are developed over the course of human evolution in order to help us with survival. Negative emotions that people often feel like fear and anxiety lets them know that danger is nearby. Feelings of happiness or excitement tell us it's okay to approach the situation. The feeling of anger lets us know that it may be an opportunity where we would need to fight. Sadness lets us know when we need to seek comfort from our loved ones.

However, as people, we have learned that emotions and feelings aren't always the best guide to how we behave. People may get anxious in situations that don't actually have any real danger, or they may get angry in situations where fighting isn't an appropriate reaction. Over the course of our lives, we've learned to pick up different habits of ways to react when it comes to responding and managing our emotions. For example, if someone had a rough day after work, their habitual behavior would be to drink a couple of glasses of wine. They do this because this action has worked for them in the past, but they may not realize that they need to change it when they may have outgrown his habit. Some people may try to numb their feelings of sadness or stress by scrolling on their phones

in order to prevent themselves from thinking about other things.

Oftentimes these types of emotional habits derived from the roots of somebody's childhood, where they first learned how to deal with their emotions. Without knowing, people may learn that numbing their emotions is the best strategy for not dealing with the negative ones, or they may try to distract themselves with unhealthy things like alcohol or food. These strategies become reinforced when a person repeatedly uses them and has received success in the past from it. By the time children become adults, they have built some emotion to behavior pathways that are not very well-established and hard to break. This is why people have so much trouble when it comes to strengthening their self-discipline because habits that have formed over the decades require lots of time and willpower to break down and be rebuilt.

In the process of establishing new habits, it also means that people will have to confront their well-worn habit. For example, if a person's goal was to eat healthily and get in shape, they may have to face their habit of comforting themselves with food and abandon it altogether. Although it may not seem like this is an emotional event, people subconsciously grow very attached to their coping mechanisms. By giving that up altogether, people often feel like they are stripped of their safety net. This means that strengthening and practicing self-discipline is very hard and emotional work. The emotions and feelings that people have managed through using their own coping mechanisms now become very apparent to them because the coping mechanism has been removed. This typically doesn't make people very happy and they often have trouble dealing with their emotions without the safety net that they would always fall back on.

By understanding this important concept, you can prepare yourself for the difficulties that you will face when you are practicing your self-discipline. Some of the practices and work that you put in will be very emotionally challenging. You may be able to initiate changes in your life using some simple and concrete goals that you've made for yourself, but you may quickly learn that if there is emotional baggage, you would have to face them head-on along your journey.

Being Self-Disciplined Does Not Make You a Popular Person

When people first begin practicing self-discipline and are excited to make him good changes in their lives, they often hope that their efforts will inspire other people to get into good habits as well. They think that by changing into a better person, and achieving the goals that they've always wanted to achieve for themselves, that they will gain respect from other people. This thought process is normal because why wouldn't you want to share with your loved ones that you are changing your life for the better?

However, in reality, most people will just think that the person who is trying to change is annoying because they go from being easy-going about what they eat to having major food restrictions if they are trying to change their diet. They will begin saying no to certain activities that get in the way of them achieving their goals. They will begin to prioritize other important things regarding the goals that they are going after rather than spending time with people that may not be exactly beneficial to them. Being self-disciplined is not something that is going to make a person more likable.

In order to be a socially desirable person, you have to be willing to spend a lot of your time with other people doing things that are often unhealthy, like eating out and drinking socially. Let's say that this person manages to strike a really good balance between achieving their goals and still remaining socially desirable. Any success that they achieve isn't necessarily going to inspire others. This is because of two reasons. The first reason is that people won't really care because most of the time they have their own problems to deal with. The second reason is that watching someone else have success when it comes to achieving goals while they're struggling with their own goals is not always inspirational; they may even see it as annoying. People may even consciously or unconsciously attempt to throw you off track because they can't bear to look at their own lives due to jealousy or other emotions.

Just to clarify, other people may not be trying to throw you off track maliciously. I don't think that people would intentionally want you to fail. However, I do

think that your attempts at practicing self-discipline to take control of your own life is not something that gets you admiration and respect from other people. Relationships are very complex interactions and sometimes doing I'm healthier things in life gets you more respect and admiration rather than living a healthy life. The message I'm trying to get across here is that self-discipline should be something that you pursue for yourself and for your own intrinsic reasons. You should not be doing it to seek congratulation or respect from others because you will likely get the opposite.

Motivation and Inspiration May Be Totally Absent

Some people may have multiple goals that they are looking to achieve. For example, it could be a mix of getting more exercise, eating healthier, pursuing a musical instrument, and being successful in their career. However, it may be that not all of those things can create inspiration or motivation. Out of those goals, there may only be one item that produces the most inspiration and motivation for a person.

Somewhere along the way of self-discipline, a lot of people realize that motivation and inspiration actually precede action. With this belief comes the expectation that the presence of inspiration and motivation will tell people what they need to do with their lives. They think that wherever there is motivation and inspiration, that is the direction that they should be heading. Although this is a lovely notion, it is not one that lines up with reality. Take someone's university degree as an example. I can almost guarantee that there were many days where a person doesn't feel inspired or motivated to do their schoolwork, but it doesn't change the reality that having a university degree is a very beneficial addition to your life. If a person were to be using motivation and inspiration as a guide, that degree likely won't be finished.

A person's choices of where they focus their self-discipline need to be carefully selected and initiated using the most logical thinking that they can muster. People may try to eat healthily or work out frequently in order to have a healthy body but that does not mean that they are inspired to do it. Keep in mind that I

am not saying that inspiration and motivation are worthless feelings. What I am trying to get across here is that the presence of these two feelings can be an unreliable source for somebody to make decisions regarding their life. For some people, inspiration and motivation don't show up until they have already put in quite a bit of work towards their goals. For example, somebody who is looking to get more muscular might not actually feel motivated to work out until they got into a regular habit of lifting weights at the gym.

You Might Not Be Doing the Right Things

If you have tried to achieve a goal using various different types of angles, but you are constantly failing repeatedly at a certain area of self-discipline, you might have to face the possibility that you have selected something that you simply might not ever be able to engage in on a regular basis. Self-discipline is not only about picking a goal or an activity and doing it despite all costs. Self-discipline is about picking the important activities and goals and doing them against all obstacles. It may be a possibility that you have simply picked a goal or activity that isn't all that important to you. It is all right to admit that and move forward. The good thing about this is that if it turns out the goal our activity was important to you, after all, it will pop up in your life again thematically and you would be able to take it up again.

Self-Discipline Fatigue

As we have learned in the earlier chapters of this book, it is extremely tiring and exhausting to be consciously fighting temptation and selecting healthy activities and choosing the productive activities over the unproductive ones. It is tiring because it constantly drains on your willpower resources. It takes lots of energy and effort to turn away from the wrong choices and pick the ones that are right for your goals. It takes lots of resistance to choose healthy food over unhealthy food that may be quicker and much more convenient. It takes a lot of effort to drag yourself out of bed on a rainy morning to get to the gym to work out rather than sleeping an extra hour.

The only way to really battle this problem is to practice your required tasks until they become a habit. You want those daily tasks that you need to do to reach a level of automation that you no longer actively think about it, and it no longer consumes your willpower resources. Some people may think that all they need is a few weeks or even just a few months to build a new habit. This mindset is absolutely wrong. The reason why our bad habits are so hard to break is because they have been built up through multiple years. Good habits will take the exact same amount of time. If you have been repeatedly binge-eating whenever you feel upset for the last 10 years of your life, except that it will take multiple years before you can break out of that habit and into a healthy eating habit. However, once you do get into that stage, you no longer have to consciously make decisions about that have it anymore and they will function on its own.

The good thing is that eventually, with repeated practice and some failures and obstacles along the way, new and better behaviors will become a habit. When this happens, it will consume far less mental resources than it did before. For instance, you probably don't feel stressed out or tired by the idea that you have to brush your teeth at least twice a day. However, if someone asked you to simply workout for 10 minutes a day, which is the same amount of time that brushing your teeth takes, you may find this much harder to do because it isn’t already a habit. Like I mentioned before, it just takes a significant amount of time before a new behavior becomes a learned behavior.

Here are some ways that you can address the fatigue that self-discipline may bring:

- There are days where you should incorporate into your schedule where you can relax and don't have to worry about the things that you have to do in order to reach your goals like dieting or exercising. You can call these ‘cheat days’ or ‘treat days.’
- You can incorporate something called the 80% rule. This means that you are accepting that you won't be a perfect 100% all the time with your tasks or goals, and getting 80% on your goals is acceptable.

- Make sure that you were getting enough rest and sleep. We learned that this is your body's and mind's time to recover from the fatigue that we have put it through on a daily basis.

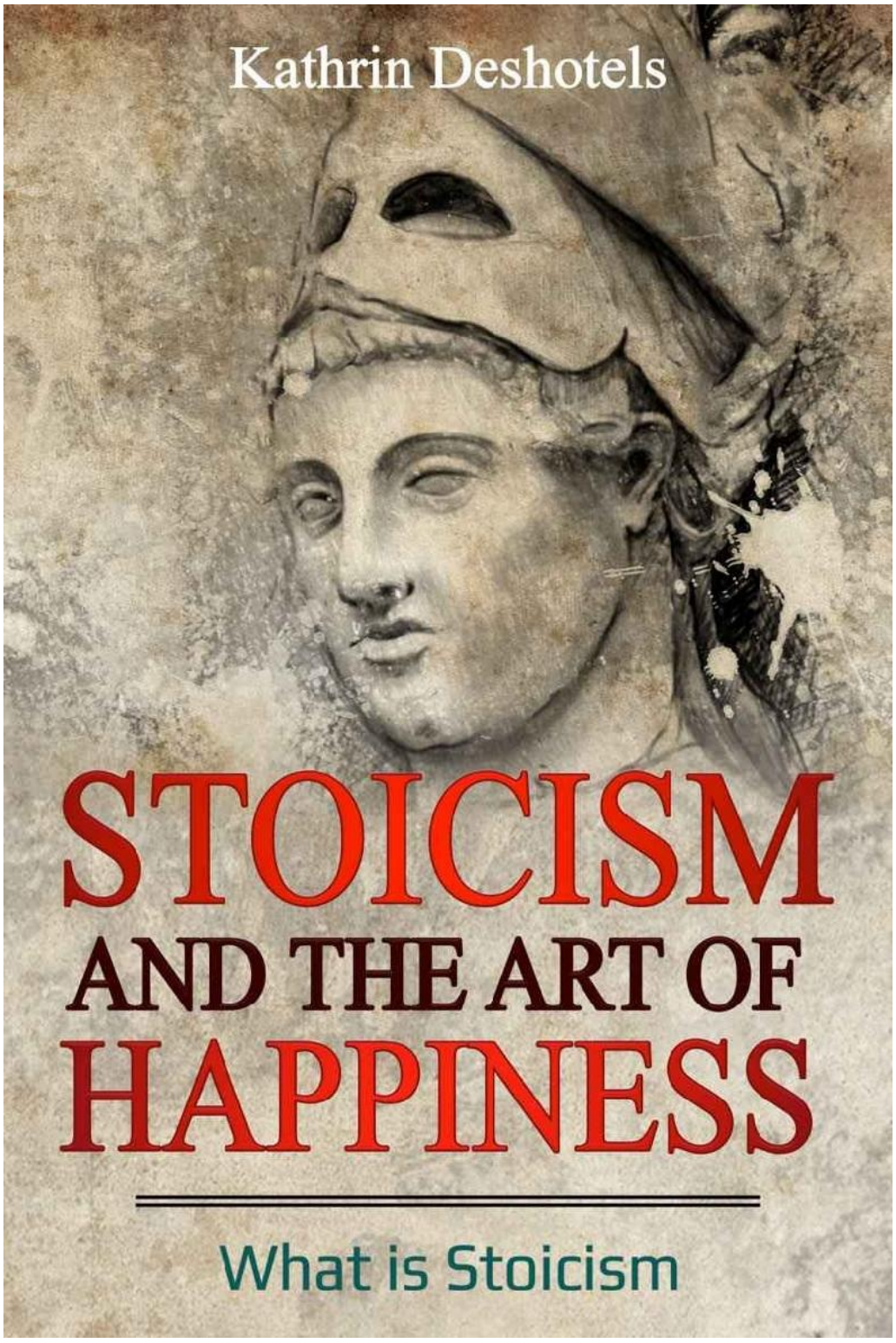
Overall, self-discipline is a very important and beneficial thing that you should be incorporating in your life. I truly believe that anything and amazing in life requires a lot of practice and focus. Having the ability to focus on the things that are most important to us and being able to do them on a regular basis even when we are approached with numerous problems and obstacles are the fundamental components of self-worth and self-esteem. Please keep in mind that this process is not going to be an easy one. There are always going to be many failures along your journey and people often experience failures on a weekly or monthly basis. You should make it a goal to openly accepting and acknowledging some of the difficulties that you have faced along the way to achieving your goals. Just know that you are not alone and people have likely faced the exact same problems that you are facing now.

CONCLUSION

First of all, I’d like to congratulate you on having the self-discipline to stick with something and finishing this book. You have already proven your ability that you do have self-discipline, you just need to learn to apply it in other areas of our life. With all this new information that you just learned, what's next for you? Keep in mind that self-discipline is all about setting goals, breaking them down into smaller ones, and disciplining yourself so those smaller and daily goals become a part of your everyday routine. When you complete the tasks in order to achieve your goal becomes a habit that is a part of your life, that is when you no longer need to draw into your willpower resources to exercise that action. By doing this, it will leave you more energy to start incorporating other actions of other goals that you would like to achieve. So like I mentioned throughout this book, think of an important goal that you have in mind and work backward and break it down into smaller ones. Start small and don't give up no matter the obstacles that come your way. I hope that one of the takeaways that you got from this book is that there will always be numerous challenges and obstacles in life.

Consistency really is the key when it comes to self-discipline. Always remember that bad habits take years to build, which means that it will also take years to break down. Rebuilding good habits takes just as long. If you find yourself falling into temptation or you find that it's getting harder and harder to draw from your willpower resources to continue to do the actions that you promised yourself that you will do, try to think about the purpose behind your goal. If

you've learned something from this book, one of the things may be that a meaningful goal creates more motivation than a goal without substance. Whenever you feel yourself losing motivation or feeling like you're unable to resist temptation, think about what motivates you in the first place to go after that goal. Lastly, I wish you the best in your journey of self-discipline and remember to forgive yourself if you have any lapses on your journey but always remember to keep moving forward.


Kathrin Deshotels
STOICISM
AND THE ART OF
HAPPINESS
What is Stoicism

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INTRODUCTION

You've probably heard someone being described as stoic to express the fact that they do not tend to show their emotions. It might be a stretch to think this person is happier than others, but imagine being entirely in control of your emotions and what other people say and do having no impact on you. This means no matter what happens around you, your mood stays the same, making you the sole force that decides how you feel.

You can achieve this sooner than think, and if you read this book, you will be taken through the history and modern practices of stoicism, and how it can change your life for the better. You will learn about the Happiness Triangle and the Four Virtues of Stoicism. If you follow these practices, you will stop speaking from a place of overcharged emotion inspired by outside forces and start acting according to virtue. You will learn to stop worrying about things that are beyond your control. In fact, you can even get to the point where you can control your own thought processes.

Stoicism will allow you to make decisions that are good for you instead of being led by emotion to wherever it wants to take you. You will get in touch with your true core values. You will learn to accept unpleasant events as they come and not take them personally. At its center, stoicism is a guide to finding inner peace, silencing the noise of the outside world, and tuning into your highest state of being.

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

IT IS A COMMON QUESTION—HOW do I become a happy person? Everyone has times where they do not feel happy. Let's face it—a lot of things happen in life that interfere with happiness—upsetting news, conflict with friends/family, and any other inconvenience you can think of. It's only natural that these events will set off negative emotions within you, such as sadness and anger. Sometimes these feelings will cause you to want to behave in ways that feel good at the moment but will be harmful to you in the long run. The negative feelings and irrational responses to them will cause unhappiness and disorder in your life. You might feel like you do not have enough of something. Alternatively, something might have happened that you do not like. Sometimes we can focus so much on what does not exist that we do not take part in our actual lives.

It is a widely held misconception that happy people are happy because they have the things we do not. However, no amount of possessions can bring happiness. Think about all of the highly successful and wealthy people who have opened up about struggling with the same emotional trials everyone else does. This goes to show that you cannot buy happiness. It has to come from an internal place.

It is also very easy to fall into the trap of thinking "I'm not happy because I don't have something (more friends, more money, a significant other, etc.) If I had those things, I would become a happy person." This mentality will doom you to a lifetime of unhappiness. This is because you are always thinking about what you do not have.

When you rely on external circumstances to be content with yourself, your happiness will have stability. Your mood will shift with everything that happens. When you practice stoicism, you learn to make your mood and self-worth consistent and independent of outside forces. When happiness is internal, it is anchored. It is like when a piece of furniture has been secured against the floor. This means it cannot be pushed or pulled or taken anywhere other than where it is right now. You must find a way to secure your happiness into one place to make it constant.

This is the true meaning of stoicism. Many people think of a person who never shows any emotions when they hear the word “stoic”. This is not entirely accurate. In fact, the goal behind the belief is to achieve happiness. Being led by your emotions will cause unhappiness because you will feel like you are on shaky ground. Think about a time where you were in a good mood because something good had happened, or it was a special day, or you just woke up feeling nice. You woke up early and got dressed nice, had time to have coffee, and sit outside. You thought this was going to be your day. You played your favorite music on the way to work. You practically skipped into the office, only to find that one of your coworkers was in a bad mood. They take it out on you and call your work ethic into question. Whatever they say to you, it brings your mood down, and now your low is proportionate to the happiness you felt earlier. You feel angry at this person for ruining your day.

There is just one problem with that mentality. That person might have been rude to you, and when someone does that, you cannot help but be upset at the moment. However, it is your choice afterward whether to stay in that mental state or pick yourself back up. It was not your fault that they said something hurtful to you because that is outside of your control. However, when they are no longer in your presence, they can no longer be held responsible for you. At that point, they only have an impact on you that you let them have. You’ve probably heard the saying that people have the power you give them over you. Take this example. You might say that the person who was rude to you was to blame for your current mood. However, take a moment to take a look around. That person

is nowhere around you. Someone who is not even present cannot be to blame for what you are doing. You must tell yourself, “I am responsible for how I feel. If I let myself be miserable and this day ends on a bad note, it is on me.” Letting your mood sink down because something bad happened is not the only option there is. You can think about something that makes you happy. You can turn on some uplifting or relaxing music. You can do any number of things that would distract you, and then you would not even be thinking about what happened anymore. You’ve probably heard that when you are feeling bitter about someone, you are giving them space in your mind rent-free. You do not have to do this.

When we are miserable, we make a choice to be. Let me explain. When you are in a foul mood, you have to actively work towards this state of mind and preserve it. Think about one of those movies where a person goes through an upsetting event such as a breakup, and they retreat to the confines of their room while they churn over this. Their parents come in and tell them they made their favorite dish, and they say they are not hungry. Their friend calls them and asks them to come to the movies with them and say no. It might even get to the point where their pet comes to them and tries to cuddle, and they reject them. This means they had lots of opportunities to pull themselves out of this sadness, even for a little while, and they made a point to reject every single one of them. This was an active decision of theirs. It might even be explained within the movie that they “could not” spend time with their friends or play with their pet; however, this is incorrect wording. The correct way to say it is that they would not do any of these things. When you reject things that could give you happiness, you are making an active decision. In the case of the person in this movie, they could have decided to go and have dinner with their family. They would be surrounded by the company of people who love them. They might start talking with their parents and get onto a funny subject or go over a fond memory, and then they might look up some time in the evening and realize it has been a while since they thought of the source of their sadness. At this point, it would feel a little bit smaller because they would realize the upsetting event is not an all-powerful force that can control their feelings. At this point, they would know that even

though something painful had happened in their life, they could still do things that made them happier and move away from the breakup.

When you give up your power and decide that you are not meant to be happy, you will continue to suffer. Then you truly will be trapped because you will be at the mercy of anything that happens around you. Once you say you have no control, you have relinquished it. However, you can get it back even after you have let it go. It is never too late to decide you are going to take control of your life back. One of the first things you need to do when you make this resolution is to decide you are going to do what it takes to make you happy.

Happiness is not something any outside force can give to you. It is something you have to conjure up for yourself. It is said that happiness is a choice. Of course, this doesn't mean you can forget about all of your problems in the blink of an eye and never feel upset again, but think about it this way. Whatever we dwell in is what we become. This means if you focus solely on the bad things that happen to you, your life will seem very bleak. It can be compared to when you tune out other noises to listen to a particular one. Sometimes we can fall into a pattern where we tune out the positive aspects of our life. If you can't see one of those right now, think about something in your surroundings that is just there. It may not be exciting, but it is not hurting anyone either.

You probably know someone who always seems unflappable. Things other people say don't get to them, and no matter how chaotic their life gets, they still manage to get everything done with time to spare and don't seem rattled while doing it. You could become like this person a lot sooner than you think by following the practice of stoicism. Let's break down the aspects of this philosophy.

Stoicism is much more than just not showing emotion. In fact, it could be said that this is a misunderstanding of the practice. Stoicism is about centering and controlling yourself. This does not mean repression. Actually, stoicism is, in many ways, the highest form of expressing your true self because when a person is following the practice, they act according to their core values.

Stoicism has been broken down into four virtues that have been borrowed from Greek Philosophy. Here is an introduction to them.

- ***Justice:*** This refers to a person's sense of morality. When a person adheres to justice, they behave in an ethical way, both towards themselves and other people. Here is an example—a person finds a credit card lying around. If they act with justice, they will turn it in so it can go to its rightful owner. On the other hand, if they steal the person's identity to buy things for themselves, this would be unjust behavior.
- ***Prudence:*** Otherwise known as wisdom, this refers to one's ability to make sound judgment calls that are good for them. They know how to recognize what is bad for them and avoid it. This could come in the form of a habit, relationship, thought process, and much more.
- ***Temperance:*** This is also called moderation. Essentially, it is knowing when to say when. Too much of anything is a bad thing, even something good. For example, if you work out too much, you will feel too sore to move, and your body will become depleted.
- ***Fortitude:*** The final virtue has to do with courage and mental strength. No one can avoid the feeling of fear, but you can decide how you respond to it. If you stand your ground and face your fears, you are demonstrating fortitude.

Now, let's talk about the Stoicism Happiness triangle. At the center of this circle is something known as eudaimonia. This could be compared to self-actualization: when a person has achieved this state, they have connected to the best version of themselves. They have made an identity for themselves and found inner peace while striving towards their goals.

In the belief of stoicism, eudaimonia is brought about by three qualities. It is a complete harmony between them. Without one, you cannot have the other two.

You will also find that they are connected. These three qualities work in a dance with one another to bring your life stability and help you reach peace.

The first one is living with arete, a word that originated from Greece that means “virtue”. When you live with arete, you do not wish for something that isn’t here yet while feeling a sense of happiness. Instead, you live each moment in a way that demonstrates your core values. The idea is that you achieve your goals by living by your values. You’ve probably heard the phrase “dress for the job you want, not the job you have”. The same logic could be applied to living with arete. You do not need to have everything you want to have a good life. It does not mean you have failed. It just means your journey is still going.

The second aspect of the triangle is focusing on what you can control. This is a very difficult thing for many people to uphold. We can wind up spending so much time thinking, “what if a sudden disaster occurs? What if this person doesn’t like me?” and other questions such as this. The problem with worrying about things like this is that you do not have any real power over the outcome of these situations. Any perceived control you have over what decisions other people are going to make is just that—perceived. The only thing you are actually doing is wasting time and energy. This is why you need to turn your focus to what you can control—examples of these are your performance and work and self-care.

The final part of the triangle is accepting responsibility. It is easy to become comfortable with pointing the finger at other people and blaming them for our own unhappiness. For example, someone says something rude to you, and therefore, you lose your temper. It might seem like the other person is at fault for making you angry, but then that places them in control of you and renders you a helpless bystander in your own life. When you live life this way, the words and actions of other people will decide your fate, and you will be at the mercy of everyone. Holding yourself accountable doesn’t mean you beat yourself up. It means you realize when you have made a mistake and resolve to do better. It means you realize while something upsetting might have happened, you can

choose whether or not you let it ruin your day.

To not practice these ideals causes internal suffering. For example, imagine you have a friend who has started spending time with someone you don't think is good for them. You feel like this person could influence them to take on unhealthy behavior patterns, such as staying out all night partying and skipping class. You want them to stop associating with this person and fear for what might happen to them if they do not. In this situation, it will be extremely difficult to stop yourself from obsessing over it because you care about your friend and do not want to see them get hurt, but you will need to for the sake of your own sanity. You cannot directly impact what another person is going to do. You can only tell them what you think. That is the extent of your control. If they cannot or are choosing not to see the consequences, this will bring them, that is something they will have to find out later. Sometimes when we get into the habit of thinking if we just hold on hard enough to something, we will be able to control it. However, what we will really do is cause emotional suffering for ourselves.

In this situation, you would need to exercise prudence and focus on what you can control. Your friend has made their decision. The only choice in this matter that is yours is whether or not you make yourself a part of the fallout. You need to be able to act based on your own personal principles as opposed to what other people would want you to do. How you view, yourself needs to be of higher importance than how others might view you.

One of the most difficult aspects of focusing on controllable things that you will encounter is learning how to stop worrying about what other people think of you. This is because it is natural to want to be liked and accepted, and to a certain extent, this can be a good thing. There are certain mores and rules about how to treat people that we should all follow. However, sometimes people make this longing to be liked develop into an unhealthy obsession.

The truth is that you will not be able to get everyone to like you. Think about how many people there are in this world, and how we all think differently. This

means there will be people whose approval you will never be able to obtain. Most of the time, it will not be a matter of them hating. You are not the bad guy, and neither are they. The two of you are just not compatible. If their personality and interests are too dissimilar, this means you will be unable to relate to one another.

Here is an analogy to show you how to think of stoicism. Think about a turbulent ocean, and its waves are crashing against the cliff. However, the cliff remains standing. It doesn't seem to be affected by the waves. Even though the water is applying pressure on it to move backward, it does not. When you have mastered stoicism, you learn to think and behave like this cliff. You do not get pulled into chaotic situations. When you learn to tolerate painful emotions, you will find inner peace. This does not mean to seek pain out. It simply means you know situations will come up in life that are painful and are prepared for them. Consistency in your mood is what you want to strive for. When your emotions are unpredictable and always changing, you will not be happy. You will never feel peaceful. You will be exhausted even though you will also have difficulty sleeping.

When you endure hardship instead of running away from it, you will become stronger until you are able to become that cliff. Sometimes, this perseverance can make you have a change of heart about what is happening. You might have originally seen something as a misfortune, but some view it as an opportunity. When you change your attitude about a situation, you might start to see that it was not as bad as you thought. For example, your job application was denied. While this may be disappointing, it is not the end of the world. Your mind might be saying, "I'll never get hired", but that is not true. You were only turned down by one company at this particular time. Also, think of the good that came of this. Your resume was seen by someone. You had the experience of applying and possibly interviewing for a job. You might have noticed some mistakes you made and resolve to correct those next time. If you let yourself get discouraged, you'll miss out on these learning and growing experiences.

In order to embrace stoicism, you need to be able to get into the mentality of it. This philosophy places high emphasis on keeping your emotions in check despite what is happening outside of them. Think about a teacher you had that handled unruly children effectively. One of the reasons they were able to do this was most likely that they did not engage in the mind games these children tried to play. They did not get into a shouting match with them or show anger towards them, which would pull the learning environment to a halt in order to do something completely unproductive. They probably asked them to excuse themselves from the classroom if their behavior was too obnoxious. Stoicism is all about thinking and behaving in a practical way. This means a person does things that make sense, and that will contribute to their success. With the case of the two teachers, the one who keeps themselves in check and doesn't stoop down to the level of the students has their career in mind, and they know they will not provide a good classroom experience to the rest of the students if they do not act like the bigger person. You have to understand the point where your emotions have become a hindrance to you.

Finally, stoicism means being content with where you are right now. Of course, there are things we all would like to change about our lives. This means you have goals, and that is a good thing. However, it can become a detrimental force if you spend most of your time thinking about what you do not have, and it depresses you. You start to feel envious and resentful of other people. When you're in this state, you're likely not doing anything to get where you want to be. This is why it's so important for you to be happy with your life as it is right now, even if you want more. Be present in your real life. When something happens that is unpleasant, you must accept it. Trying to will it not to be so or pretend it doesn't exist will only perpetuate the situation.

Denial is a state of mind that will cause more suffering than any real-life situation will. It doesn't even give you any actual relief from what is going on. This is because being in denial does not mean you don't know what is going on. You can see that something is not right but are refusing to look at it thinking that will make it go away. Not talking about something does not mean it is not there

anymore. Imagine smelling smoke and seeing a small fire in your house, but turning away from it and saying, “that’s not happening, there’s no fire because I will not accept that.” That sounds pretty silly, doesn’t it? If you kept doing that, before you knew it, your entire house would be on fire, and your life would be in danger. The same thing happens with any other problem when you deny its existence. It only gets more severe until, eventually, it forces you to deal with it, and by then, it is too big, and you are not equipped enough to handle it. Back to the example of the house fire, eventually, it would spread too much for there to be any possibility of salvaging your house, and you would be lucky to escape with your life.

Now let’s take that analogy and put it to a more likely real-life example. Let’s say you are taking a class and have gotten a couple of bad grades. Naturally, being in and working on assignments for this class would start to cause anxiety. Looking at your previous grades would feel depressing. You would not want to think about it, and it would be very tempting to just hide from it. You get what you think is relief from tuning in to your favorite TV shows or whatever other means of escape. When you are away from this class and not thinking about the grade, you feel better, and this might cause your brain to trick you into thinking this means you are doing the right thing. However, this plan would soon backfire, because then soon, the time would come for another test or assignment. If you hadn’t spent any time working on the subject matter for this class, you would come into it just as unprepared as you had for the last one, and so you would get the same results as last time. This would mean another poor grade to bring down your average even more. A few more times of this, and it would become very difficult to salvage a passing grade out of this. The anxiety would grow more every day as the low scores pile on.

This means that while denying a problem’s existence might bring some temporary relief. It will eventually catch up to you. You must face a problem head-on because it will give more inner peace in the long run. In this example, think back to where you get your first bad grade. Your best bet is to go to your professor. Be honest with them about what is going on. Say, “I don’t understand

this material and need extra help." Don't worry. Your professor will not think less of you for this. In fact, they will have more respect for you because you are taking the initiative and are willing to humble yourself and admit that you are struggling.

This is a way that throwing away your pride can work in your favor. It is never easy to say you are not understanding a subject. There is an embarrassment factor about feeling like you are behind the others. You fear judgment from your professor. It takes a special type of courage to ask for help. You don't want to be thought of in an unflattering light. You might also have worries about being singled out by your professor in the future if you do this. However, if you're having embarrassment about this one grade and the thought of asking for help on the subject, imagine how you will feel if the problem escalates and you have failed the class. Pride will stand in the way of you getting the things you need. Remember that no one is a master in every subject.

Pride turns you to perfectionism, which is an unhealthy practice. You are telling yourself that the only acceptable outcome is a complete success. It also puts you at odds with other people. You start to see the world as a competitive place. People who need to constantly do things perfectly go through a lot of internal suffering. Victory is always a cause for celebration, and no one can avoid feeling a twinge of disappointment about a failure. This is perfectly normal. However, a perfectionist lives and dies by these successes and defeats. If they have lived up to their strict standards, they feel a temporary sense of finally having reached their goals. However, the time will inevitably come where they make a mistake, and this will devastate them. They take losses so personally. For example, let's say you particularly excel at a certain subject. You have grown accustomed to getting a large amount of praise from your peers and professors. However, no matter how good you are at something, you are going to have an "off day", where you are not on top of your game. You are going to get an answer wrong. A quiz score will come out a little lower than your usual performance. A perfectionist will become extremely distressed by this fact. There will probably be a lengthy internal dialogue of self-punishment. There might also be

resentment for classmates who did well this time, especially if the teacher praises them for it. They might get into the mindset that if he praises someone else for their intelligence, he is implying that they are not intelligent. This is a form of making something about you when it is not, which will cause you unnecessary suffering.

On the other hand, if the person practices stoicism, they can write off that quiz as a mishap. Just shrug it off and say, “Well, that wasn’t my best one. Maybe I need to study a little more.” You might have just gotten a little complacent. When all of the material you’ve studied up until now has been easy for you, you might not feel the need to take it seriously. Maybe you just weren’t feeling well that day. Either way, it is in the past and, therefore, out of your control.

Stoicism turns off the vision towards uncontrollable things, and there is only one timeline you can have any impact on, that being the present. This is why it goes against prudence to let yourself become distressed about any other one. It is difficult to do this sometimes because fears will come into your mind about the future as well as unpleasant memories about the past.

Your head might be swimming right now. I know this is a lot to take in, and the task seems like a heavy one. But don’t worry. We’re going to go through the history of stoicism, how to think and act like one, and how to keep these behaviors up. It’s mainly a “mind over matter” deal. Get yourself into the mindset that you can take your power back over your emotions, and you will succeed in it. When you have done this, no one will ever be able to influence you in a way you do not want them to again.

A QUICK HISTORY LESSON

ONE OF THE best ways to learn about a theory and how to bring it into your life is to learn the origin of it. Let's start by giving you a brief overview of how stoicism came to exist and how it developed into what it is today. This way, you will be able to create your own understanding of the philosophy so that you can transform it into the iteration of it that will best suit your needs.

Stoicism's roots come from Greece and Rome. There are three major philosophers who are often regarded as the ones who brought stoicism to the forefront and developed it into what it is today. There were three clusters of people who were crucial to the development of stoicism, and their influences on the theory were classified as the three different phases of it.

The Stoic School of Philosophy was fathered by Zeno of Citium, a Hellenistic philosopher. Studying Cynicism under Crates of Thebes, Zeno found his basis in the pursuit of a virtuous life that is in agreement with nature. By using the reason afforded to humans and by rejecting the pursuits of wealth, power, being famous, and sex, the idea was to live a simple life thriving in the happiness that freedom from chasing those frivolous things that bring emptiness. As a wealthy merchant, Zeno survived a shipwreck while traveling from Phoenicia to Piraeus and while in contact with a bookseller, he found Xenophon's Memorabilia. He was so intrigued by how the book captured Socrates and wondered where he might find men who lived like this. He met Crates, who happened by, and Zeno's appearance resonated with Crates because it did not belay his wealth. Zeno

ultimately relinquished his wealth to live in poverty on the streets of Athens, and through study and immersion in the belief of Cynicism, he carved root of Stoicism. This concludes what is known as the first phase of stoicism.

The second phase is known as Middle Stoa, and its primary influencers were Panaetius and Posidonius. In Rome, it is rumored that these scholars taught their theories to students. Whether or not this is true, we can be sure that there was a man known as Cato the Younger who developed his entire belief system around stoicism. He embodied the idea of not compromising one's core values for anything—he refused to change his mind about anything, no matter what anyone else said to him. He believed in strict morals and that there were no exceptions. He thought if one did not do this for themselves, they would be susceptible to betraying their morals. His political stances became a template for stoics that would come after him because of this, and because of the fact that he was against the ruler at the time, Julius Caesar, who at that time was considered to be a tyrant.

Finally, we get to the Late Stoa, led by Musonius Rufus, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. This is where stoic philosophers became more literal with their teachings. In the past, it had been a very theoretical discussion—basically, they were asking, "what qualities would make a person the perfect stoic?" However, these more modern theorists delved deeper into it and began to paint the picture of what stoicism would look like in real life. They went into the true ethics of a stoic and how these morals and beliefs would be acted out in real life. It is one thing to make a broad and vague statement such as "live with virtue" and "accept responsibility"—but what does that mean? How would a person incorporate that into their lifestyle? That is when living with virtue became defined as less of a matter of acting based on a set of ethics and more of a matter of expressing yourself in the highest form. With this mindset, completing a painting, writing a book, or even scoring a touchdown in a football game could be considered living with arete. This is because you are tapping into your highest potential.

Another interesting thing about the stoic philosophy is the fact that it was quite

progressive for its time. For example, they believed that women could live with virtue just as much as a man could, which was a far cry from the views of society at that time that women and men had their own separate worlds that it was best for them both to stay in. They also believed in holding men and women to the same moral standards. For example, they did not think it was right for female sexuality to be seen in a different light from its male counterpart. They thought there was something inherently wrong with there being positive connotations to one but not the others. In essence, they thought everyone should be seen equally. This meant everyone was responsible for their own actions and happiness.

You might be thinking, “I can’t just go off and give up everything I have, that will never work!” Fear not—you can still be stoic even if you do not do that. In fact, that is an outdated practice and not a recommended one these days. The early stoa had the most extreme ideas on keeping oneself grounded and not depending on wealth. In these phases of the theory, there was an extreme emphasis placed on limiting what you have. The purpose of this was so that people could be content with living without creature comforts. This was so that happiness could be completely internal. In fact, some iterations of stoicism encourage people to practice tolerating painful events to build up their mental fortitude, claiming if you were desensitized to it, it would no longer be able to hurt you.

There was a great emphasis on depriving oneself so that they can be indifferent to both pleasure and pain. The aforementioned men would wear mere rags and forego shoes to keep themselves humble and to not fall into the pattern where they were chasing money and possessions. They considered themselves free of these confines after they made these decisions.

Many of these concepts have had to be shed to fit modern times. In this year, you could not sensibly give up all of your wealth. You would be condemning yourself to serious hardship if you lived this way. This is because the cost of living is great now, with all of the bills and taxes that come with being a citizen.

We are not in any way, encouraging you to go into poverty. However, some of the values in this mindset could be used to keep you grounded now.

Although the themes and morals of stoicism have changed over time and will most likely be subject to change in the future, a few things remain constant. One is the theme of not wishing for more. It is one thing to create more for yourself, which is good. It is another to pinpoint the lack of something in your life as the source of your unhappiness and thinking that would change if you got it. Instead of relinquishing your wealth, you can modify it to fit the time you live in. One of the ways you could do this is to not spend more than is sensible. Think very carefully before you make a big purchase. Sometimes people will buy cars, houses, and other large investments such as these without thinking clearly about it. There are also those times where we go to the grocery store to pick up a few things, but then see a number of things we like in there for fashion, entertainment, or something else of that nature. We know this item we are thinking of buying costs too much to be sensible for our budget, but we decide we need it because it will increase our happiness. Then we go throughout the store to buy more things with this mindset. After a while, we have bought a bunch of things that were unnecessary, and then we wind up being low on cash. You could combat this with stoicism by going to the store with a list that you are going to strictly follow. Get what you need and nothing more. Once you have completed the list, leave the store, and do not look at anything more. When you do this, you will be improving your spending habits.

Another is to pick what you focus on wisely because you will end up wasting a lot of time in your life if you do not. Imagine you are playing a game of checkers, and you control the red pieces. Whatever the person you are playing against does is entirely up to them. It is a waste of time and energy to think, “I wish they hadn’t made that move, now I won’t get to do the one I was planning to do.” Get that previously planned move out of your mind because it is gone. Shift your focus to the options you have now after the new developments.

Of course, stoics do everything they do for the purpose of remaining grounded in

the sense of emotions. They do not believe in the romantic belief of following one's heart, as the heart does not tend to make good decisions. When one makes decisions using logic, they will actually be a happier person for it in the end. This is because they will not do something that is bad for them just because there might be emotional attachment involved. For example, they will not miss out on an opportunity of a lifetime for the advancement of their career for a relationship or friendship that may or may not work out in the end. They can see which choice would make the most sense for them and do not have objections about choosing it.

When you are thinking about how to apply historical stoicism to your life, think of Cato the Younger. You do not have to imitate him to the letter, but think about how steadfast he was in his beliefs. He was faced with a lot of criticism, and many people thought he was wrong. People would try to convince him of this, but he did not listen to them. For him, there was no such thing as gray. He thought you either live up to your values or you do not. For him, his morals were unrelenting.

Having core values is essential to having self-esteem and being connected to yourself. The beautiful thing about stoicism is that it leaves a lot of freedom for its followers. In many ways, they can decide for themselves what is important to them and the ethics they value more than anything. The rule is more about how you treat said ethics. It could be anything. It might be the notion of being hospitable to guests. It might be the value of being involved in current events, or it might be preserving values of an older time. Whatever it is, find it and take it in close to you. Do not let anything or anyone come above it. Cato the Younger would never have backed down from what he believed in because someone else would not be his friend anymore if he continued to follow them. That person would be the one that had to go. This might seem harsh, but it is true that you become the people you surround yourself with. You become what you say and do. When you are having moments of doubt, think about the stoics who came before you. Remember their teachings and then remind yourself of your own virtue, whatever that definition is for you.

Do not worry if there are aspects of the ancient definitions of stoicism you leave behind. This is nothing more than the age-old story of laws, theories, and beliefs evolving over time as they should. As long as you are putting your best foot forward, staying away from meaningless conflicts and troubles, and keeping yourself in the driver's seat of the direction your life takes, you are practicing stoicism. It might seem like this is a daunting philosophy that only an elite few can follow, but it is really much more simple than that. It all starts in the way you think, which is why in the next chapter, we are going to delve into how a stoic would think about the events happening around them in order to interpret and respond to them in the most effective way.

THINKING LIKE A STOIC

Now, we are going to delve into the mind of a stoic. It is not much, unlike yours. In fact, there is a part of you that is already wired to be one. It comes in the form of that voice in your mind that says, “you need to do this because it is good for you” or “that isn’t a good idea.” This is good news because it means there is nothing you need for this undertaking that you do not already have. Now, it is just a matter of putting these resources to good use and making sure that voice, the logical one, is the one you listen to whenever you need to make a big decision.

Before we do anything else, I want to stress the importance of making yourself the ruler of your own world. The first thing you need to know about thinking like a stoic is that they would assume the power of their thoughts and actions. A stoic holds themselves accountable for both their successes and their wrongdoings. They do not fall into the “victim mentality” in which a person points the finger at other people when something goes wrong in their lives, knowing that only keeps you stuck where you are at today. When you’re a put yourself into the role of a victim, you are stuck where you are. That is the entire concept of a victim. You do not have any control over what happens to you. Other people decide your fate, and you can only react to what they do. Some people consistently hold this mindset until it becomes a way of life for them. In fact, that is what it is called—victim mentality. No matter what we do, we are gaining something from it, even if it is elusive to us on the surface. When a person assigns themselves to victim

status, their gain is the lack of culpability for their actions as well as inaction.

Here's an example of that. You've probably known at least one person who often talked about a dream they would've liked to pursue (writing, acting, singing), but didn't—or, in their words, couldn't as a result of outside circumstances. They talk about a person who wouldn't let them, or how the world never presented an opportunity to them. They often say they would've achieved worldwide success had they not been held back. They get to imagine this because they never actually put themselves out there and tried. They didn't contact any publishers, go to any auditions, etc. Because they never tried, they never failed, and that places the blame solely on others, leaving the person free to resent them for being the sole thing that stood between them and what they wanted.

The downside to victim mentality is the same thing as the upside—the person is not responsible for anything that happens to them. They take their hands off the wheel and let life happen to them, and then become frustrated at the results. If you know a person like this, you probably often hear about a problem of theirs that you can see a clear and quick resolution to. When you point it out, you will be met with, "But I can't do that, because…", and this reason is most likely yet another problem they could quickly solve if they wanted to. A conversation with this type of person is never productive. You will become frustrated after a while because all you can do is listen to problems they have rendered unsolvable. This person also becomes frustrated with themselves because they always shoot down a potential opportunity or solution for what is plaguing them.

With this in mind, we need to understand the difference between "can't" and "won't". When a person "can't" keep their temper under control, it is actually a refusal to do so. It is telling the world they can control you. If they just talk to you in an inflammatory way, they can reduce you to pure anger. When you give in to an emotion, especially anger, you take your hands off the wheel. Things we say in the heat of the moment are often complete departures from what we really think.

In many ways, the stoicism silences unnecessary noise so you can listen to your

true self. This is because emotions are not always accurate. They are often fleeting responses to what is going on around us. Feelings are how we interpret the outside world from moment to moment. This means they are not always a reliable source of information. In fact, the most dangerous time to act is when you are feeling overcome with emotion for many reasons. You can end up saying something that is not only going to hurt the feelings of someone you care about but goes against what you actually think. It can cause you to throw your hands up and decide there is nothing you can do, resolving to stop trying. Your mind will tell you things that are not real sometimes. You do not have to have any form of mental disorder for this to happen to you. In fact, it is a habit that everyone struggles with sometimes.

I'm going to bring some psychology into this to talk about emotional reasoning. It is relevant to stoicism because it explains why thoughts and feelings are not always accurate and, therefore, should be analyzed before they are acted upon. Because the messages we get from our brain can be so persistent and emotionally charged that we can be tricked into seeing them as real despite the lack of any evidence to support it. Essentially, we accept something is true without proof to support it because of a hunch. A common example is a person thinking their romantic partner is no longer interested in them or having an affair. This is emotional reasoning when the partner has not changed their behaviors in any way that would warrant this type of suspicion. In this case, it is all in the person's mind. They think, "I feel like my partner is cheating on me. I wouldn't have thought that if it wasn't true. Therefore, it must be happening." This will cause them to act differently toward their partner, more warily, and most likely questioning them more often. This will cause the other person's behavior to become different, which in turn will confirm the person's thoughts that something in the relationship has changed, not realizing the fact that the change began with them.

Emotional reasoning is dangerous because it causes a person to make major decisions based on misinformation. This is why we cannot interpret a feeling or thought as irrefutable proof that something is true. Having an irrational thought

does not make you an irrational person. Everyone has them, most likely on a daily basis. Your behavior becomes irrational when you act on the thought. Another time people tend to use emotional reasoning is when they are arguing with someone. You might think in a moment of passion, “I can’t stand this person!”, when you normally think of them as a close friend. Thoughts like these sometimes cause us to say things that are hurtful, and we regret later. This is why you really need to think about what you are about to say when you are feeling angry. You need to ask yourself, “Is this really what I feel? Will I feel proud of myself about saying this later?” The answers to both of these questions will most likely be no if what you want to say comes from a place of anger.

With this in mind, it is a good thing to control your emotions. It will save yourself and others a great deal of distress. You will not damage your relationships with harsh words and then subsequently have to try to repair them. When you are engaging in thought or behavior, ask yourself, “Is what I want to say going to add anything productive to the conversation?” Having a thought about something does not mean you are bound to act upon it. Thoughts do not exist in the real world. If you write it off and let it go, it will do just that. You probably will not even remember the thought later on because long-term memory does not retain most thoughts. If it is not important, it will be forgotten.

The intensity of emotions can trick us into thinking they have power over us. The only way that can happen is if we give them that power. If you are experiencing a high level of anxiety, you might feel a sense of impending doom, like something terrible is just about to happen to you or someone you care about.

When this is happening to you, try this. Think about the biggest worry in your life from a couple of years ago. It’s likely that it has been long since resolved, and you never think about it anymore. This goes to show that emotions are fleeting, and that is why you should not make permanent decisions based on them.

This ties into the practice of focusing on what you can control. Worrying about things you cannot impact will inevitably cause you to be overcome with

emotion. You will be conjuring up more and more worries and disastrous predictions. This means images of things that have not even happened yet and maybe never will are tormenting you. There is also a sense of frustration that comes with thinking about things that you cannot influence the outcome of. This is because the thought is distressing, and you also know you are powerless over the situation.

Things outside of you will happen the way they will. Do not assign powers to yourself that you do not actually possess. Everyone does this at times. For example, sometimes people develop the idea that bad things will not happen if they worry about them and vice versa. For example, if they make it to work on time after a late start, they will attribute this to the fact that they spent the entire drive there panicking about the time and conjuring up images of being fired. In another instance, they are eating and spill something onto their shirt. They think about how they were not worried about spilling their food and assume this is why it happened, which confirms the theory in their mind.

This is known in psychology as magical thinking. Essentially, this is when we trick ourselves into making connections between our thoughts/behaviors and the things that happen in the real world. This makes us give ourselves abilities as well as responsibilities that we do not actually have. It is what causes us to think something is our fault when it happened outside of us. Think about that old saying, “don’t step on a crack, or you’ll break your mother’s back.” While this is just a children’s rhyme, if someone actually developed the mentality that they would be responsible for an injury that happened to their mother if they were to step on a crack in the ground, they would be taking part in magical thinking.

Using a stoic’s mentality, you recognize magical thinking as a practice that goes against prudence. This is because it is not good for you, as it only causes stress. Putting the blame on yourself that does not belong there is not living with virtue. You cannot be the best version of yourself if you are trying to figure out how you should be held accountable, say, for a car accident that happened miles away from you. Car accidents happen because of errors that one of both of the car’s

drivers made. It is not because of a ritual you forgot to perform or a thought you had. This type of thinking is irrational.

This is where we will discuss placing undue importance on yourself and why it is detrimental to your mental health. As a disclaimer, this is not to say you do not matter. What we mean by importance here is you having an impact on circumstances outside of you or others being solely focused on you. When we think everyone else's behaviors are a direct response to us, it can make us crazy.

Say you join an organization, and less than a week later, a long-time member quits. You had never met that person before this week, and therefore, share no history with them, and yet you feel like their reason for leaving the group must be about you, that your presence somehow offended them enough for them to leave something they had invested a lot of time into. Let me tell you now that it is almost impossible that they left the group over you. You have not known each other long enough for there to be a serious problem between you. If you do not recall a negative interaction, there probably wasn't one. Consider the other possibilities for the actions of others before you assign yourself as the source of them. Perhaps this person had to leave because they had a family emergency. Maybe there had been a dispute between them and one of the members, and this just happened to be the week where it all came to a head. We only have the information that has been passed on to us. You cannot determine someone else's motives because you are not inside their mind, and you do not know what experiences they have had to lead them to the decision they are making.

Also, think of this. Even if you and that person had a problem. It was still their decision to leave the group. They could have done any number of things instead, such as talking to you about the problem and trying to come to a solution or even just deciding that the two of you would stay civil but otherwise stay away from one another. Remember the Happiness Triangle's principle—focus on what you can control. This situation would not be among the spectrum of your control. While you need to hold yourself accountable for your actions, you need to do the same to other people. If someone tries to say they made a decision, they didn't

want to because of you, do not listen to them. They are just trying to put the blame on someone else for their own mistakes.

Now, let's talk about facing up to your own struggles and doing so the right way. A stoic does not spend time on something that serves them no purpose. Take inventory of your life and what it is being filled with. When you do this, you will have to be very honest with yourself. Also, take this activity in the spirit it is intended for. This is not a time for you to shame yourself about your shortcomings. This will actually encourage bad habits because your self-esteem will be lowered. Say you want to change what you eat because you have noticed your diet consists of too much junk food and too few nutrients. If you insult yourself for this, you will feel embarrassed. The strange thing about a bad habit is that feelings of shame about it will make you cling harder to it. This is because the only thing that brings relief from that painful sensation is indulging in the habit, which provides pleasure and, therefore, relief. Now, the problem is that you have to do it more and more often in order to escape the negative emotions. This is known as the shame cycle. That is how any form of addiction or unhealthy behavior is perpetuated.

One of the most common impractical things people do is to beat themselves up for mistakes they have made in the past. If you do this, your mindset will be chaotic. You will have a hard time acting with virtue if you do not feel good about yourself. You might feel like what you have done is too much to come back from. Everyone feels like that whenever they have done something wrong. You might even feel like it is wrong to forgive yourself and move forward. However, if you do not, you will not be able to become a better self. For one, whatever this big wrong thing is that you have done is probably not as bad as your mind has made it out to be. Even if it is, you cannot afford to dwell on it. If you think it is only you that you will punish, you are wrong. Have you ever been around someone who constantly beats themselves up over everything that goes wrong? It probably wasn't a very enjoyable experience. It is uncomfortable to be around them because they are always serious and uptight. Doing anything with them becomes stressful because you are worried that something will go wrong,

and then they will begin their self-punishment. They take normal losses and rejection very personally. When they do something wrong, everyone feels the effects of it. When you do a self-punishing ritual, everyone else feels it too. This is because it makes it so that no one can move on from it. When you've had that experience with someone else, you probably had to spend a great deal of time trying to make them feel better and convince them that they are still a good person. While you feel for the person the first couple of times because of their internal struggles, the task of building them up will begin to become tedious because it never seems to yield any results. You will start to feel annoyed about the person and cringe whenever something goes wrong.

When you think about it this way, people with overly-developed consciences are not better people. You might think you are doing right by not letting yourself off the hook and holding yourself to what you've done. However, that is not what holding yourself accountable is about. It should be a movement toward self-improvement, not a torture device. As long as you live in the past, you are keeping everyone involved trapped in an unpleasant moment. In this sense, you are keeping everyone else on the hook in your attempt to properly chastise yourself. This is why when you mess up. You have to move on. Do less putting yourself down and more building yourself up. This does not mean thinking you are perfect. It means you give yourself constructive criticism.

Instead of telling yourself, "you slob, you eat too much junk food," talk to yourself the way you would to a friend you are concerned about and want to help. Try an internal dialogue that is more like this. "My eating habits need to improve. I'm going to do this by cutting back on junk food and opting for more vegetables. Before long, I will look and feel much better." This is constructive criticism. The problem with the first dialogue is that there was merely punishment. It would be like sending a child to their room and telling them behaved badly, but never telling them what they did wrong.

Another thing a stoic does is not take things personally, especially when they shouldn't be. For example, a person might think something bad happening to

them is a punishment for something they did wrong in the past, or that some form of higher power is angry at them and wants to punish them by throwing hardships into their life. This is known as a cognitive distortion. Essentially, this is an incorrect assumption about the way that the world works. In psychology, it is believed that many of a person's problems stem from these incorrect beliefs and that the goal of therapy should be to turn them into more healthy thought processes.

Let's say something goes wrong with your car on your way home from work. It may be inconvenient, but you can be assured that this is not a punishment from a greater force. It is not any retaliation towards you, nor is it persecution. Everyone runs into car trouble at some point. If you fall into this type of thinking, you will spiral into a cycle of paranoia. When you jump to the conclusion that a random misfortune is a personal attack, you will begin to think the world around you is conspiring against you. Your quality of life will go down because you will be living in fear. You will also begin to feel resentful towards the world because you feel like it is attacking you. Just because something that happens to you is unpleasant, it does not mean it is personal. I know it is easy for your mind to make that leap because what is happening feels like an attack. However, it was just an event. Think about when leaves are falling off of a tree. They do not choose somewhere specific to land. They just land wherever the wind takes them. The things that happen in life are just as random. When you start thinking some malignant force wants to specifically make you unhappy, think of the leaves. This one just happened to land near you.

Another common mistake is making your happiness depend on outside sources. Many people fall into a pattern where they feel unhappy and blame it on having something they do not want or not having something they want. They talk about what they wish had not happened or what someone else should have given them. Even when the person they blame is no longer a part of their lives, they hold them accountable for holding them back in life and making them unhappy. The problem with this thinking is that you will always have some sort of problem going on. There are very few moments we have in life where everything is going

well, and there is nothing to worry about. This means at any given time, there will be something that is causing you to be unhappy.

This is why your happiness needs to come from the inside. When I say happiness is a choice, I do not mean you can just start ignoring all of your problems. I mean, you can choose to not let these events bring you more discomfort than they warrant. For example, you are driving, and someone makes a rude gesture at you. You have a choice at this moment. You can become angry in retaliation and give them your own gesture, letting this event set up the tone for your day. You can also decide that the person is just immature and not think about them again after they are gone. If you do not let them, they can never have an impact on you again.

It is a false belief that you are powerful when you are angry. Actually, the person who has angered you is the one who has the power over you. You are never weaker than when you are screaming at the top of your lungs in a blind rage. You have absolutely no control over what you are thinking or feeling. In fact, some people talk of feeling like they have “blacked out” when they get angry enough, and then they do not remember what they said or did. There is nothing powerful about having undocumented time. When a person cannot control their anger, their relationships are often strained. They have difficulty holding down a job. They have a lot of incidents in their life that they look back on with embarrassment.

When you decide you are going to control your emotions, you are making the resolution to take charge of your life. You are taking your power back. Think about when we were discussing fortitude or mental strength. Every day, we face challenges. If you went through today, did everything you were supposed to do, and persevered no matter what setbacks were thrown your way, then congratulate yourself. You showed fortitude and therefore adhered to one of the core principles of stoicism. You have won half the battle when you decide, “I’m not going to let this keep me down.”

In order to be stoic, you need to make your happiness stable no matter what is

going on outside of you. Earlier, we talked about being happy, even if you do not have what you want. You might not feel fortunate based on the fact that there is a lot that you want. However, also think of it this way. If you have the time to want things, it means you are getting everything you need. If your biggest problem is not having something that is a luxury but not a necessity, it means all of the basic needs—the ones you need for your survival such as food, water, and shelter—are being met. Often we think too much about what we wish we had and do consider the fact that we are not doing without any of the necessities. There are people in this world who do not know where their next meal is coming from, or do not have a home or are trying to live off of the land. You do not need to feel guilty for having these things. Just think of it as an opportunity to put your problems into perspective. It is a part of being grateful.

All of us could use a lesson in being grateful once in a while. That is why every year, there is a day dedicated to giving thanks for what you have. However, it doesn't have to be Thanksgiving to take time to be grateful. If you find yourself often feeling down about and wishing for more, and it is affecting the quality of your life, try this short exercise. At the end of every day, gather five things you are grateful for. It might take a little while at first. It always does when you haven't done this exercise. This is because we have to get back into this habit. Also, remember that it does not have to be this great fortune. It could be a small pleasure in life. For example, you found a quarter. You might have watched a beautiful sunrise. Someone you live with might have brought you coffee this morning, or you had time to cuddle with your pet. Think about a song you discovered recently that you really enjoyed. The things you give thanks for can be this mundane.

If you repeat this exercise at the end of every day, you will notice a change in the way your mind works. Your thoughts have an impact on your actions and personality, and you do have the ability to influence your thoughts. Thinking about things you are grateful for will change what you focus on. Sometimes we can make bad situations worse in our minds and minimize the good. If you do this, you will naturally think of your life as being unhappy.

Let’s do a disclaimer first. You cannot control every thought that passes through your mind. There will be rogue thoughts that carry no meaning. They will come in and out of your mind without any to-do made of them, and this is what should happen. However, the general flow of your thoughts can be affected. This means whether they are generally positive or negative, benevolent or malignant, and so on. This is why this book has placed emphasis on not dwelling on slights against you because if that is all you think about, you will become a bitter person. You can stop these thoughts from entering your head. It is everyone’s responsibility to do it. If you find your thoughts becoming more resentful, you need to tell yourself, “I need to stop this.”

Some people physically stimulate themselves to discontinue a thought. Sometimes they do this by clapping their hands. This is because the motion and the noise will interrupt your train of thought. Think about a time you have been in deep thought, and then a loud noise brought you out of it. You probably even forgot whatever you were thinking about. In this case, that would be a positive thing. When you cut negative thoughts off at the pass, you can make room for more positive ones. If you have been thinking negatively for a long time, making the transformation into a positive thinker is going to be difficult. It is something you are going to need to make a consistent and genuine effort. Think about how many times those more bleak thoughts have run through your mind. It would be impossible to count that. This means you will not change your outlook on life just by trying to change your thoughts a few. This will need to be a matter of repetition. Think about when it is a new year. You have gotten so used to writing down the previous year on checks and other papers that it is your instinct for a while. At first, you need to make a conscious effort to write the current year. You will probably accidentally write the last one a few times and need to erase it and replace it with the correct one. However, after you have repeated it a few times, it will be second nature to write the correct year. This is how changing your thoughts works. The moment you decide to do it isn’t when you start to see the change.

You will need to persevere in changing your thoughts. There will be a period of

time where you are putting in the effort but not seeing results. This is going to be frustrating, and it will be when you are tempted to give up. It is the most important to keep going when it seems the least worth it. The rewards for your efforts will not always be immediate. Think about how many times you had to fall over before you mastered riding a bike. It is said that either you win or you learn. It might be disappointing when you do not get the results you want, but think about what you gained from the experience. For example, you have struggled with anxiety about interacting with others in the past, and you are trying to broaden your social circle. You ask someone to come to an event with you. They decline. You might feel like this is a defeat, and it could be tempting to give up on a social life over this. However, you also need to think of the victories that were had at this moment. You did not have the courage to talk to anyone before, and now you are able to initiate social events. Next time you might have more luck, and now you know that you are capable of being bold. Thinking like a stoic is all about being where you are right now, taking the good news as well as the bad, and then picking yourself back up to take on another day. When you can think like a stoic, you can act like one, which is exactly where our journey is going to lead us next.

ACTING LIKE A STOIC

WE'VE TALKED about how to think like a stoic. Now it's time to apply it to the real world. Remember that there is a difference between the idea of something and the act. You can tell yourself that you are never going to let outside forces affect you again, but then real life comes along. You need to be able to keep these practices up when they count. Keeping your emotions in check is going to be a lifelong process—something you are going to need to put effort into each and every day.

They say charity begins at home. So does stoicism. You should keep your living space clean to feel a greater sense of order in your life. It is said that a cluttered house is a marking of a cluttered mind. It is harder just to navigate in your own home when it is dirty. The visual this creates is also depressing. You need to take pride in your own home. This is a part of living with virtue. You need to beautify your life. When the clothes are piling up in the laundry basket, and dust is piling up on the floors, and you look at that sight without caring, it means you are divorced from your own life, and arete is absent from your life. It is a sign you need to start caring about what your life looks like, both inside and out.

You will be surprised at how differently you will feel about things when you have cleaned your living space. For one, you will no longer be trying so hard to find things, which will reduce your stress. You will feel more organized. You will have pride in your house and be excited for the company as opposed to dreading it. The appearance of your surroundings will be ones you are proud of

and want to look at rather than things you try to ignore and convince yourself are not that bad. When you can own the space you live in, you have created a space where you can strategize about how you are going to take on your day. It will be somewhere you can go to whenever you need to retreat after you have been over-stimulated, which is the next thing we will be discussing.

One of the first lessons you need to learn is pausing before you act when you are feeling emotional. The first stream of messages going through your mind is just noise. Think back to when we talked about emotional reasoning. You do not need to acknowledge every thought and feeling that passes through your mind. When you do this, thoughts that are strange and unsettling will seem like a threat. This, in turn, will cause you to have anxiety about them. This is because you are viewing them as an entity with power rather than just the meaningless passing thing that it was.

Another part of embracing stoicism is to put the words and actions of other people into perspective. There is nothing that will make harsh words from someone else not feel painful. However, the importance you place on them will decide how much they impact you. Remember that you do not have to take every criticism that is made towards you seriously. Someone saying something about you does not make it true. Also, remember this—what they were saying might not be as bad as you think.

Before y0u do anything else, you need to do is to determine whether what the other person did was truly a personal attack against you. Sometimes we can develop a false assumption that we are being criticized. For example, a person might be looking at you, and you think there is something wrong with the way you look. This is flawed thinking because you do not have a way of knowing whether or not that was really what they are thinking. They might have been looking at you because they liked your outfit and were wondering where you got it. They might have thought you looked like someone. It might not have even been you they were looking at, but someone or something else entirely. There are a lot of different reasons someone could be looking towards you without it being

that they think badly of you. Even if the worst-case scenario is true, this can still go on without even being a blip on your radar. It will not be easy at first, but over time you will be able to tap into the side of you that can move on from disapproval.

Stoicism will also teach you that not every outside stimulus requires a response. Let's say that a person really is looking at you because they are silently judging you in some sort of way. Who is this person to you? Have you ever seen them before? Will you ever see them again? The answer is probably no. In this case, what impact will their criticisms have on you? It'll probably be a passing thought for them before they move on to the next thing. They might whisper to the person with them. They might tell their friends who you will never meet, and they will never see your face. Within the next day, they would not be able to pick your face out in a crowd. This person's thoughts will literally have no impact on your life. In that case, even if they are looking at you with judgment, you can still go on with your day, enjoying yourself. In this case, you have won because you are having a good time while they are feeling bitter.

Also, think about the kind of person who would truly take the time to cast judgment onto someone they have never met. This is the marking of a very negative person. It says a lot more about them than it does about you. Also, think of this. A person who spends their time thinking bad thoughts about others tends to suffer from low self-esteem. They need to bring other people down in order to feel good about themselves. It is a means of projection. This means even though they are making a statement about you, it is more about themselves. A person like this will continue to do this throughout their entire lives. They will speak ill about others to you and about you to those same people. This means they have nothing better to do with their lives than to discuss what is going on outside of them, likely because they do not like the way their own life is going. However, this is their problem, not yours. It will be up to them to fix this if they ever want to. Until then, the only thing you can do is to make sure you are living in a way that is true to yourself because that is the only way you will ever be happy.

You have to find a way to make yourself able to live your own authentic life regardless of what others say. You are not going to have a flawless reputation, no matter what. Also, think about this. Even if people notice and say things about you, it is a very small part of their day. It will be a fleeting thought and nothing more. This means it should be nothing more than a blip on your radar. Now, this is easier said than done because we are wired to want validation from others and to be liked, so how do we combat this?

For one, weigh out what this one person has said about you compared to what everyone else has. Think about the people who are important in your life, are close to you, and that you have contact with on a day-to-day basis. This means your friends and family. These are the people whose opinions of you really matter. If someone tells you that you are annoying or impolite, think about the times other people have said differently. This will help you keep from listening to one person who said something that was rude and uncalled for.

It is as simple as when you are picking out what to wear for the day. If you wear something you think someone else will like, but you are not fond of it, it will show on your face and in your behavior. This means you will not act confident, which will make you not look as good as if you just went ahead with what you wanted to wear all along. Now take this idea and apply it to who you want your friends to be. Now put it into what you want to spend your free time doing. Then, if this is what you want, use it when you are deciding who you would rather have as your significant other. When you adopt this mentality, you will be doing a service to yourself and to everyone else. You will be happy, and the people around you will know who you really are.

Another thing Stoics do not believe in is complaining about their problems. While this will not always be avoidable, there is something to be said about not wallowing in your own problems. No amount of “This should have been done for me, and I shouldn’t have done that,” and so on is going to help you. You’ve probably met someone who had a chronic habit of self-pity. Most likely, they weren’t successful because they talked themselves out of doing something

before they even began to do it. Constant self-pity will lead to a defeatist attitude. It also means your situation will never change. If you need to verbalize it, do so. Just say out loud, “It’s time to stop feeling sorry for yourself and do something about it.

We’ve talked about time management. A bad habit we all fall in to at some point is procrastination. Many times it happens when you are assigned a long project about something you do not find interesting. You also might not be sure about what you are supposed to do. Whatever the reason is, you put off doing it until the last minute, and then you have to do it all in one sitting, worrying the whole time about whether or not you will be able to complete the project on time.

Often, when we procrastinate, the time we should have been using to work on these projects is filled up with a leisurely activity, such as watching TV or playing on the computer. When we do this for long periods of time, it means there is a lot of wasted time. A person who procrastinates regularly will often complain about never having enough time and always being busy. If you never feel like there are enough hours in the day, you need to take a long and hard look at what you are doing throughout the day. There might be things you need to change about the way you spend your day. If you see that watching TV takes up a little too much time, consider shaving down how long you spend doing it. There might be a friend who you spend too much time talking to. They might be a needy person who you have to invest a lot of energy into. Because so much happens in our lives, it can be difficult to figure out what the source of our problems is. One way you can help organize your life is to keep a written record of the most important parts of it.

When you write down your emotions, you can deal with them in a way that makes sense and is good for you. You might even figure out some things you didn’t know about yourself. For example, you are writing about your partner, and you realize you are bothered by the fact that you haven’t spent much time together recently. Now, instead of it coming out in a rush and in a way that accuses your partner of being neglectful, you can deal with the problem in a

level-headed manner. You can tell them you miss spending time with them. You can suggest going on a road trip this weekend. You can do something proactive.

Stoics think proactively instead of reactively. When a person takes a reactive approach to their life, they do not prepare for what is going to happen. They are not in charge of what is going on. Things happen around them, and the only thing they can do is react to the situation. They take their hands off of the wheel. When you are proactive, on the other hand, you prepare yourself for every possible scenario so you can prevent avoidable problems and properly manage the unavoidable ones. For a real-life example, we are going to compare two students. Jane doesn't show up to class on time, takes no notes, and doesn't take advantage of after-school study opportunities like student instructors and tutoring. She also puts off doing her assignments until the last minute. When grades are being finalized, she is in a frenzy trying to get everything done, often resorting to pulling all-nighters, all the while fearing she will not pass her classes. She has to resort to begging the teachers for extra credit, some who may not take kindly to students doing this at the last minute. She then blames the teachers for not instructing the class well. Lisa, however, pays attention in class and has all of her future assignments written out in a planner, so no due dates will sneak up on her. She completes all of her assignments ahead of time. At the end of the course, Lisa can relax, knowing her grades are going to be good, and she ends the year in a calm and orderly fashion. Jane and Lisa are taking the exact same class but have an entirely different experience in there. Lisa lightens her own burdens while Jane creates problems for herself.

Accepting responsibility is something we all struggle with from time to time. Earlier I mentioned the example of having an outburst of anger due to someone being rude. That is going to happen at times, no matter how much you work to keep your emotions in check. However, if this happens consistently, you might need to take a look at how you respond to situations.

Upsetting things are going to happen to you. It is a fact of life. Life is a series of good and bad things happening to you. Sometimes it will be better, while at other

times you will struggle more. When a person does not hold themselves accountable, they will say, “I had a bad day, of course, I was rude to my friend. Anyone would be after the kind of day I had!” However, this logic does not hold up to proper scrutiny. For one, whatever upsetting events happened to you today, they did not have anything to do with your friend. This means you are punishing someone for something they did not do. If you let yourself lose control like this and take your frustrations out on this person, you will make a bad day worse. If you go off on them, you are going to hurt their feelings. This is going to make them either avoid you or retaliate. At this point, on top of whatever else happened, you will have had a conflict with someone you care about.

Now think about the alternative way things could play out in this situation. You acknowledge that it has been a rough day, but you decide to leave it behind. It has already happened, and there is no undoing it. You have already lived through it, and so there is nothing more to do about it. When you meet up with your friend, you see this as an opportunity to move on from that unpleasantness. You decide you are going to talk about something completely unrelated to them. You go out and have a great time together. This makes it so that your day ends on a completely different note from where it began. Even at the end of your day, you can still change it. At the last minute, something better can come along. This is why you cannot decide to give up, no matter how bleak things look. What kind of mood you end your day in is something you can control, which ties back into a central point of stoicism, which makes up a third of the happiness triangle.

When you focus on what you can control, you might start to notice changes you can make to your life to improve the quality of it. When we think about the things that happen that are out of our control, it can make us feel hopeless. You start thinking about all of the things that happen outside of you and yet impact your life, and you might start to wonder, “Is there anything I can control?” This will tempt you to take your hands off of the wheel because you reason there is no point in trying to control your life because something else inevitably will. It is true that outside forces can put you in a fix, but it is also true that you can choose to let these events destroy your life, or you can think, “I can’t do anything about

that, but here is what I can do about this."

The place we are in is of our own making in many ways. However, it is easy to get into a pattern of thinking that says, "I can't" or "I'm trapped." For example, a person might not feel fulfilled in their relationship and think, "I'm unhappy because I am stuck in a loveless relationship." However, this is not true. You are not stuck in a relationship. You might think you need to stay with this person because of the amount of time you have been with them, but that is a mental wall you have put up between you and doing what you actually want to do. When you first started seeing this person, you thought it would be a good thing. Now, they have shown that they have personality traits that you cannot stand to live with. You didn't have a choice in that person revealing or developing these traits. That is why you have to think about the choice that is in front of you now—either to stay with them or to leave. That is where your point of impact comes in. Forget about trying to change them. That is never going to happen. You can only change your arrangement with them.

Imagine you know someone who always asks you for a dollar when you see them. You begin to feel resentful towards them because you never have a dollar for yourself. Wishing they would stop asking for your dollar isn't going to work, because that is their decision. You might think, "They always take my dollars!" This may be true, but they are not taking them by force. You are giving them what they asked for. You might feel a sense of obligation to give it to this person so as not to disappoint them, but that is not the same thing as actually being forced to do it. After you start telling them no a few times, they will start to realize they aren't going to get what they want from you and move on to someone else.

In order to keep your emotions in check, you need to sort them out. It was hinted at before, and now I'm going to explain the importance of writing your emotions down. That is why you should keep a journal. Record events from the day in it and how they make you feel. Often we go through the day without even recognizing the impact its events had on our psyche. The danger to this is the

fact that if you don’t acknowledge something, that doesn’t make it go away. It only makes its presence stronger. When people refuse to admit something, it will bottle up until it comes out at an unbidden time and in a way you don’t expect. Imagine shaking a bottle of soda and then opening it. This is what will happen without self-control. This is why it is so powerful to write down what you are feeling. We do not even realize it, but when we speak, we censor ourselves. We choose our words based on what will be well-received by others as opposed to what we are really feeling. However, when you are writing it down, you will not do that. You will say exactly what you want to, and in a private document that no one but you will ever read, this is a good thing.

Unfortunately, sometimes a journal will not be available, and there will be a task at hand. There will be times when you have to get through a situation even though you have other things plaguing your mind. For example, you might have had an argument with your partner, but still have a business meeting to attend to. Your emotions might feel all over the place right now, but you cannot let this show at the meeting, or you will come off as unprofessional. First, you would need to get your breath under control. Sometimes, when we are stressed, we can forget to breathe evenly. Breathe in slowly and then out in the same fashion. You will immediately feel some relief when you do this. This is because holding your breath can make your head feel like a pressure cooker.

Sometimes you simply have to tell yourself, “I can’t think about this problem right now. I have another one that needs my attention more.” In the example above, your business meeting has to take precedence because we are talking about your career and source of income, and you do not want to seem like you are off your game at this time. You will need to put on a brave face. Keep a smile up. Even the fact that you have to shift your focus to smiling instead of withdrawing into yourself can help. Be present in the conversation that happens in the meeting, and contribute to it. Ask questions and listen to what the others are saying. This can lead to positive interaction with others, which will be encouraging for you at this time. You will feel better about yourself if you are able to make a contribution to this event. There is nothing you can do about the

argument with your partner right now, and thinking about it is only going to make you more unhappy. You have to think about the task at hand.

Stoicism will never be an easy task. As humans, our first instinct is to think about how events affect us. We want to protest to unpleasant events and think about how unfair they are. However, this will not change what is happening. You might not want to accept what is happening, but it is here. Take the above example, for instance. It will take an effort to put your relationship troubles to the side in order to prioritize your meeting, but you must remind yourself why you need to do this. Your job needs to take absolute priority over anything else because this is going to be what keeps a roof over your head food in your refrigerator. A relationship will not fulfill these needs. While it may be important, the things your livelihood depends on must come first. Also, think about this. Your relationship will definitely suffer if the argument you had leads to you having trouble with your job.

It can be difficult to manage your emotions and keep yourself together, and that is why you need to make sure you are choosing a healthy method to do it. It is important to go over some of the more unhealthy coping mechanisms people commonly fall into and how to avoid this. This is not to say anyone is bad for doing these things. However, it does mean that they are taking part in something that will be detrimental to their health if it continues, and it needs to stop.

Before we go any further, I want to make a disclaimer that I am not trying to imply that alcohol itself is a bad thing. However, it is fair to say that it is a commonly abused substance when someone is trying to cope with stress, most likely because it is a depressant. When a person is under the influence of alcohol, they are not bothered by the things that would normally distress them. This means if they are experiencing stress, they will not have the same thought processes about it as when they are sober. Whenever a person is drunk, they say whatever is on their mind because they do not fear the consequences of their behavior. This creates a sense of numbness, which is something a person struggling with anxiety would understandably seek out.

One of the problems with this means of stress relief is the fact that alcohol also has a tendency to amplify emotions a person is already feeling. This becomes a bad thing when they are already not in a good state of mind. They can become morose, and while they will express a lot of emotion, it will not have happened in any productive way, so nothing will have been resolved. In fact, when people are using alcohol as a crutch, they tend to damage their relationships while they are drunk. The negative emotions they suppress while they are sober are brought to the surface, causing them to become irritable. This is what creates a “mean drunk.” There comes a point of intoxication that it becomes virtually impossible to control what you say and how you act.

If you want to have a drink in the evening, there is nothing wrong with that. However, if you are starting more and more days feeling ill, trying to piece the events of last night together, and feeling ashamed about the things you said, this is a sign that you need to pull back some.

Stress can also cause a person to withdraw from the outside world. Little by little, everything starts to feel like too much work. Going outside of your house and into town feels overwhelming. It might feel too stressful to drive. You feel safer in your own home and feel an extreme aversion to leaving it. Enjoying your home isn’t a bad thing, but being bound to it because it feels like the only safe place is. That is how agoraphobia starts to develop. That is why you cannot let too many days go by that you decide, “I don’t feel like it” when considering going out and doing things. Then it will become your go-to answer. You will start to think of different excuses for it—not feeling well, being tired, not having slept well, and more. Sleep is particularly affected by this. If you do not go out and do anything, you do not expend any energy. When this happens, it will cause you to be unable to sleep at night. As a result, you will be awake at absurd hours of the night. This will cause you to have to sleep until a very late hour of the morning or even until the afternoon. However, you did not get quality sleep. You merely passed out after having been awake for too long. This means you will wake up feeling groggy and irritable. You will have slept most of the day away and still not feel like doing anything. You’ll decide it’s too late in the day to try

to get anything started. You might promise yourself you are going to make a dramatic change tonight—get to bed early, wake up at the break of dawn tomorrow and conquer the world—knowing deep down that is not really going to happen.

Notice that with all of these unhealthy coping mechanisms, there is one common theme. They are avoidance tactics. They are born of an unwillingness to face one's problems. This is why it is so important to come to a state of total acceptance about the circumstances we are dealt with. When we try to avoid thinking about them, we begin to engage in behaviors that will be harmful to us in order to dissociate from our own lives. When that happens, we are letting go of power over what happens in our lives. There are many problems in life that can be avoided by simply facing up to whatever the problem is. Think about any time you have known something was going to happen and were dreading it. Say you had failed a test or done some other type of thing you knew your parents would be upset about. The whole time you were hiding it you were stressed to the high heavens about trying to keep the secret covered up. When they finally found out, was there a sense of relief even though you had gotten caught? At this point, the secret was out. There was no more dreading and hiding and lying—everything was out in the open. The chips were going to fall wherever they would. Whoever was going to be angry would get angry. Whatever punishments you received would happen. It would now be in the rearview.

A stoic faces their problems head-on. When you know exactly what you are dealing with, and all of the cards are on the table, you will then be able to figure out exactly what you are going to have to do to get out of this situation. You will find at this point that you are much less afraid of the future. This will make you feel in control and therefore at peace.

Stoics should not be mistaken for being passive. They stand up for themselves. They just do it in a different way. They know how to pick their battles. They know that just because someone is trying to pick a fight, doesn't mean they need to. People can easily recognize a person on the internet who is trying to start

chaos and is baiting a potential victim. There is a multitude of words that are used to describe them, but this can also occur in real life. Imagine that kid who would sit behind someone and bother them—poke them repeatedly, keep whispering to them, and generally doing things for the sake of annoying the other student. Their end goal is to make that person lash out, at which point they will become meek and seemingly frightened. They will look sheepishly at the teacher, who will see the other student as being the aggressive one and then they will be punished.

You might feel like there is no such thing as making this person go away, but they will if you let them know you are not going to be any fun. It would be like talking to a wall trying to get a reply. They will eventually get bored. If you let things and people around you get to you, you will lose sight of your real personality because you are focusing on initial reactions. You have to sink deep into the art of placing yourself in the dominant position over these knee-jerk emotions.

HOW TO PRACTICE STOICISM

THEY SAY PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT. You can make the resolution that you are going to embrace stoicism, but that is not the same as upholding it. There will times that it is very difficult to keep up the habit of stoicism. Here are some ways you can practice staying in control of your emotions rather than them controlling you. Some of these techniques will be physical, while others will be psychological. This is because a calm emotional state depends on both of these factors.

Don't underestimate the power of exercise. Not only is it good for your physical health, but it can release some unpleasant emotions. For example, many people have taken up kickboxing as a means of controlling their anger. The emotion is released, but not in a way that will destructive. This leaves your mind feeling clear so you can go through the day as a calm and levelheaded person.

Another exercise you should give a try is yoga. It is a slower-paced method, but every bit as beneficial. All of the poses emphasize focus, balance, and breathing. All of these factors add up to an ability to relax. Many times, a yoga instructor will tell their students at the beginning of the class to get rid of thoughts of the outside world. This is because, in order to find relaxation, you need to simply put aside your worries for a little while. There is nothing you can do about them right now. This is partially why yoga poses are often ones that require concentration, such as balancing yourself on one leg. This forces you to shift your focus to properly executing the pose.

You should also learn about meditation. This practice encourages mindfulness, which is essentially keeping your mind in the present. You are not lamenting about the past, which has already happened or worrying about the future, which cannot be predicted. A successful person does not let their mind be plagued with unproductive and self-destructive thoughts such as “what if something bad happens to someone I love and it’s my fault?” or “I’m such an idiot for having done that”. They think, “what can I do today to work toward my goals?”. Throughout the day, we are bombarded with information—new responsibilities, changes in plans, inconveniences, and more. This can cause you to have thoughts racing around in your mind until we get stuck on one, such as “how am I going to get all of this done?”. The more your mind repeats it, the more intense the stress it causes will become. Think about how when a set of cords has been carried around in a bag for a long time. They become tangled up to the point where they are unusable. It takes you a little while to get them untangled, and in order to do that, you have to sit down with them for a little while with no distractions while you figure out exactly how to unwrap them. Meditation holds you into your own mind, which is something you will need to be able to do if you are going to stay true to yourself.

One of the core aspects of being a stoic is the fact that they hold fast to their values and do not change them just because someone else tells them to. This doesn’t mean you can’t listen to the other person’s point of view. However, if there is nothing you stand for, your foundation will be brittle. Find something you’re passionate about. It doesn’t have to be the noblest cause in the world. Just get involved in something and believe strongly in it. Become active and mean it. You will be happier when you care about something and stand for it because then you will feel a sense of purpose.

This sense of purpose does not always have to be about the grand movements for things outside of us. It also applies to the smaller tasks that will only have an impact on us. Think about how you go through your day. Sometimes our days and even weeks go by as a blur because we have not stopped our engines long enough to register what is going on. This means we aren’t putting proper care

into what we do. If you find yourself hurrying too much, slow down a little. Do your daily activities more gradually and effectively. Often, when we are doing things for other people, such as a project or other favor, we will take our time and make sure to do it right. However, when we are doing things for ourselves, we hurry. We choke down our lunch, wash our face as quickly as possible, hurry ourselves when we're at the front of a line, so we do not inconvenience anyone. It is most people's first instinct to try to get out of the way and not be a bother to anyone. When you do this, you are not living with virtue because you are not putting effort into the betterment of your life. You are worth the few more minutes it would take for you to finish your lunch at your leisure or make sure you have all of your belongings before you leave a place.

Another core part of being a stoic is making your time valuable. There are 24 hours in a day, and one thing everyone gets is the same amount of time every day. There are obligations we all have—school, work, and other things. Everyone also has free time, even if it is less than others. This time is filled up with something, and what you do with it is your choice. If you want to feel like your time has been well-spent, you need to make that happen. You must create the circumstances you want for your life. If you just wish things could be different for you without actually doing anything to make that so, all you will ever have are wishes.

Another thing you should also consider having a person to coach you in managing your emotions. There are people who make a career out of it. They are known as therapists. Therapy is to be thought of as something crazy people do. This is not true. Actually, the people who act the most "crazy" are the ones who will not go to therapy because they refuse to deal with their problems. If you go to therapy, you are taking an active role in managing your emotions. If you do not wish to see a psychologist, there are online sources that you can speak to, such as blogs and articles written by life coaches. They will give you tools that you can keep in your back pocket for whenever you need to use them. You will be better off when you have these things because then you will have a plan of action for when life throws a challenge your way.

Even though life is unpredictable, you can still be prepared for what could happen. Stoicism emphasizes preparing for the worst. This means you cannot pin all of your hopes on one outcome. You might prefer a certain one, but do not put yourself in a dangerous position where either this works out, or you have no backup plan. Here is what I mean by this. Imagine you are just about to finish high school and are trying to get yourself set up for college next year. There might be one school in particular that you want to get into, and that is not a bad thing. It is perfectly fine to put all of the effort you can into that application and hope you are accepted. In fact, this would be living with arete because you are creating something that is as perfected as you can make it. However, it would not be wise to only apply to that school. If you did that and were not accepted, you would not be able to start college that year and all of your plans would be pushed back. Let's say you apply to others. You don't get into your dream school but one of the other schools accepts you. It may not be exactly what you wanted but your future is secure and a degree is valid, no matter what university you get it from.

A stoic accepts the fact that things will not always go the way they want it, and that they are not owed anything by the world. This is a part of lessening the importance one places on themselves. Some people develop a chip on their shoulder because they do not feel like they are as fortunate as other people. They are resentful and envious of what they have. They feel like things are handed to other people while they are denied. This makes them feel like they are entitled to things, that the world owes them compensation for the ways it has let them down. When this does not happen, they become even angrier and assume they are one of those people who do not get the same breaks as other people do.

There are a few flaws in this thinking. First, it assumes that everything everyone else has is something that was handed to them. It ignores any struggles they might have had to overcome to achieve what they have. That is why this is self-centered thinking. It makes a sweeping generalization about the world. It also ignores the fact that if someone has succeeded in something—starting a business, finding a fulfilling relationship, having a social life, etc.—they had to

go out and work for that. These things did not just appear in their life. You do not get anything you do not work for. You are not owed anything for your past troubles or even because you have been kind and put the needs of others before your own. That is another flawed logic some people develop, that they will someday be rewarded for behaving in a self-sacrificing fashion.

Unfortunately, no one is going to notice how good of a person you have been and how much you have given up and give you whatever you want for that. This type of thinking will only lead to disappointment and anger. The person you will become will not be a good one. Let's say you wish you could start a business. Find out what it takes to create one. Get a solid idea of what you would want to sell. Think about whether you are aiming for business to business-b2b—or business to customer—b2c. Talk to people about your idea. Ask them what they think is lacking in that field. This will help shape your idea of what to sell and how to sell it. Start creating an online presence. It is not an easy task, but it is possible. It will require a lot of work on your part, just like anyone else who has ever made it in the business world has had to do. The same idea applies to anything you want. You have to grab it with both hands. Forget about not having any familial ties that would help in this department or any other advantages you don't have. That is beyond your control. Focus on what you bring to the table. Figure out what your strong points are and capitalize on them. Maybe you are creative. Maybe you have a charismatic personality. Everyone has a trait that is helpful for being successful in the business world. A helpful activity might be to take a personality test to see how you can use your particular type to your advantage.

Now let's talk about how to simplify your life so you can be your most effective self. Stoics emphasized not keeping things you don't need. These things become clutter. It is easy to find yourself putting things away because you'll deal with them later. We often keep things for much longer than we should because of the sentimental value they once held, such as a gift from a close friend or a favorite childhood toy. We hold onto these possessions even as they start to look old and withered and nothing like they did when they were given to us. At some point,

looking at these things does not even give you joy. It is sad to look at them because of how much they have deteriorated, but you still have them because you feel an obligation to keep them. You might feel like you are not being appreciative of the gift if you throw it away now. Keeping things that have seen their better days out of a sense of guilt will cause internal suffering.

Try thinking about the spirit this gift was given to you in. Say you had a teddy bear your parents gave you as a child. You loved it while it was new and you were young, but now you're an adult. You don't play with teddy bears anymore, and yet you're still keeping this one. It's old and dingy now, pieces of it are missing, and there are other obvious wear and tear. This is not the same toy your parents bought for you all those years ago. If they first saw it the way it is now, they would not have gotten it. They saw the cute and fluffy toy it once was and wanted you to have it so it could be a fond memory for your childhood. It's like a Christmas card. You give that to someone because you want to wish them happy holidays for that particular year. You would not want it to become something they feel beholden to years later even though it just taking up space and contributing to the clutter in their life.

Material things are meant to come and go. They are in their best shape when you first get them. No matter how gently you handle them, they are still going to take damage over time. After a while, it will be time to get rid of them. After you have used it for what it was intended for, all it is doing now is collecting dust. It is not a sign of you being ungrateful or lessening the bond between you and your friend by throwing something away that was from them. You still care about them just as much. You have your memories of this possession, and the two of you will exchange more gifts in the future. When you feel like you have to keep something even though you want to get rid of it, you will feel depressed when you look at it. That's not something a truly treasured item would do for you. It would make you feel good and you would proudly put it on display for anyone who comes to your house to see. You would want to be asked about it so you could talk about it. If you cringe at the thought of it, it is not bringing any value to your life. You do not owe it to anybody to keep something that is just getting

in the way, adding clutter to your life, and depresses you. No real friend would ask that of you.

When talking about clothing and other aesthetic items, if you have not used or worn it in over six months, you probably aren't going to. It is not a good idea to hold on to items with the thought of "someday I'll want to use it again." If you feel like a friend would want you to keep it, you might be dabbling in the dangerous art of people-pleasing.

People-pleasing is a pattern of behavior you must get out of if you are to become happy. On the surface, being a people-pleaser might seem like a noble thing. However, when you delve deeper into the psychology of a person with this trait, it is no less selfish than any other manipulative tactic. This might seem like a harsh analysis of this behavior, but everything that everyone does comes with some form of gain. When you think about what is going in a person's mind when they agree with everything a person says and tries to completely accommodate them, there is self-interest involved. They want this person to like them and perceive them as a good person, even if their words and actions are not aligned with how they truly feel. That is why it is being referred to as a manipulative tactic. This is not to say that a person who does it is evil. Everyone has manipulative tendencies in their own way. However, right now, we're talking about people-pleasing in particular and how it will harm you and others.

When you try to please everyone, you and up not having an authentic self. You behave in a certain way around everyone to make them happy. Sometimes people who do this are not sure why they still have a hard time making and keeping friends even though they often go out of their way for people. For one, people can tell when someone is being insincere about who they are. It is unsettling because they know they are being fooled and cannot figure out what angle the person is coming from. Think about when a person gives you a fake smile. It probably does not create feelings of warmth. You might even feel a little frightened because you are trying to figure out what is really going on in their mind. In order to become a people-pleaser, you will have to have an extremely

distant relationship with the truth. This is because when you are trying to please everyone and not make any waves, you will have to tell people lies in order to save face. For example, someone asks you if their shirt and pants clash. You think so, but you force a smile and tell them it looks fine. This means you have not truly advised them, but told them what you think they want to hear.

The other big reason people-pleasing is a manipulative tactic is that everything a person does under this mentality is working towards an end goal. They are looking to gain something at the end of it. Thinking of it this way, it may be true that they are always there for others in their time of need, tell them what they want to hear, and listen to their problems, but they are doing all of this because they want something from the person. In the end, if the plan fails and they do not get the companionship and closeness they feel they deserve, they will become resentful and angry. They have the ability to change their mind about someone very quickly. A person can be extremely important to them one minute and written off as “just like all the others” in the next.

Do not obsess over trying not to say the wrong thing in social interactions. You have to accept that at some point you are going to say the wrong thing. Everyone says awkward things at times. At this point, you just need to shrug it off and change the subject. You cannot let every mistake you make cause you pain. You will not be able to function in this world if you do that. You cannot predict what people are going to receive well. Also, make sure you are interpreting their reaction correctly. Cognitive distortions can sometimes lead us to interpret events and actions of the people around us in incorrect ways. When you have this going on, it can cause you to assume what everyone says to you is a negative thing. This will make you feel like you always need to defend yourself, and like you have done something wrong. You will never be able to reach your highest self if you are plagued by self-doubt.

You do not make good decisions when you live in a state of being unsure of yourself. It will cause you to be indecisive. This means you will never make a decision with confidence because you will then be going over it and wonder if

you did the wrong thing. Your social interactions will be very difficult because when you are telling yourself over and over not to make a mistake, you will be nervous, and it will show. Other people will be able to tell when you are nervous and this will be off-putting. This is because it will cause them to feel nervous because they will feel just as unsafe to speak freely as you are.

You will need to learn to back yourself up in your decisions. When you are faced with a decision, both options will have pros and cons, but you will need to choose one and feel good about it, even if there are ways in which the other one would have been better. Start out with a simple, no-risk decision. You are at the movies and trying to figure out which one to see. One of them has an actor you really like in the cast list, but you've heard some negative reviews about the movie itself. The other one doesn't have anyone familiar in it, but you've heard some very positive things about it. This means there is no such thing as a perfect choice. You might wish you had made the other decision later, but that will not be the worst thing that could ever happen. There is no such thing as living a life completely free of regrets. You have to figure out which benefit means more to you and which downside you could live with, and then once you have come to that decision, you need to be confident in the fact that you did the right thing.

You will not be able to be successful if you can never get behind yourself. This means you need to silence the voice in your head that says, "What if I did the wrong thing?" and "Maybe I should have done something else." This will make it nearly impossible to keep your emotions in check. When you do this, you are causing yourself undue stress. Make this rule with yourself. Doubts about whether this is the right thing to do should be reserved for before you have made it. After you have committed to do it and gone through with the actions, all of that needs to come to an end. This is because once the deed has been done, it becomes a part of the past and therefore is no longer something you can control. This means you need to shift your focus to making the most of your current circumstances. You will hurt yourself if you cannot do this.

You have to understand that being indecisive does not mean you will never have

to make a decision. It just means that they will all be made for you by outside forces. Remember that you still make a choice even when you choose to be indecisive. Imagine that someone is asking if anyone wants a candy bar and that they have five of them, and whoever asks for them first will be the ones to get them. If you wait to figure out if you should ask for one, it will eventually be too late because the last one will have been given away. You still made a decision in that situation—to wait until the outcome of it was out of your hands.

Think of a stoic person you admire. They do not even have to subscribe to the philosophy of stoicism. However, their personality lends itself to it. They are able to keep themselves in check even in distressing times. They know how to de-escalate conflict. They are able to work under deadlines without becoming too distressed. They always come prepared, and if there is a setback, they know how to roll with the punches and come up with a solution using whatever you have.

Being resourceful is a part of having fortitude. You may not have the ideal circumstances and tools, but you can still think of ways to bide your time. For example, a resourceful person might realize they have been spending a little too much money or have just gotten a big bill that means they do not have a lot of money to go out to eat this week. Instead of panicking about what they are going to do, they go to the kitchen to see what they are going to come up with. In almost any kitchen, there are enough ingredients to come up with some sort of meal. They realize they have some noodles, tomatoes, salt, and pepper. This means they can have simple spaghetti. It may not be their ideal meal, but it will be substantial for the time being. This is how a person with fortitude thinks. They do not dwell on how unfortunate their circumstance is or how it is unfair that it is happening. They think about what is available to them to get the job done.

Being envious of what other people have and feeling cheated out of things will get you nowhere in life. You will just continue to become more and more frustrated. This is what happens when remains in a state of feeling sorry for

themselves and counts all of the ways in which they have been wronged. A person who does this has the erroneous belief that their set of unfortunate circumstances are a special case and that no one else feels like they do. Whatever the situation is, there are other cases like it. This is not to be diminishing, but comforting. Whatever obstacles you are facing in your life, it is not something that has not been experienced before by many other people. If they can navigate through it, you can as well.

A stoic knows when they need to make tough decisions and how to make the right one. They make them using their mind as opposed to their heart. Sometimes, when our decisions come from our heart, we can behave illogically. We will do things that are not good for us because of something we feel an attachment to. A common example of this is when people insist on holding onto a relationship that is not good for them. They are not truly compatible and they cannot figure out a way to communicate in a healthy fashion. They might have even broken up before. Usually, it has happened several times, but then they start sifting through their fond memories of the person and they reconnect with them. By the time this cycle has repeated itself several times, the two people have gotten into a vicious cycle. They have too much history between them, and therefore, all they know how to do is to revert back to the behaviors that caused them to fall apart in the first place. Sometimes people who have engaged in this cycle can even end up romanticizing this pattern in their relationship. They rationalize that because they have been through so much together, they share a love that is more than everyone else’s. They might even see it as an epic story comparable to the most famous romance books and movies. This is a product of thinking emotionally and not logically because a person looking at this situation from a logical standpoint could clearly see that this is a toxic situation and one that both parties desperately need to talk away from.

In stoicism, self-preservation and maintaining your core values must take precedence over affairs of the heart. Ending this relationship might cause you pain, but it will be temporary. As you move on, this aching will subside. You will have the prospect of finding a new, more healthy relationship, and at the

very least, you have gotten something out of your life that was damaging your spirit. You might even begin to realize over time that you were not holding onto that relationship for the reasons you thought you were. As humans, we can confuse habit or the desire not to be alone for love. This person feels like a safe place to go to. However, when you think about it, that is not true. Nothing that is the source of such inner turmoil is safe. You might think letting go of this relationship would be too painful, but think about the long-term suffering you have been through because of it. A situation like this is always unstable. When you feel like your romantic relationship is hanging in the balance, you will naturally feel an extreme level of anxiety. When this type of thing is going on, you will be in a constant state where your stress level is through the roof, which over time, will do great damage to your physical and mental health.

Keep in mind that you can have fond memories of something without keeping it. It is like when you get rid of a jacket you loved when you were a child. You will always remember how fond you were of it, but now it has turned into something that doesn't fit anymore and has become old and withered. It was a good thing back in your childhood, but now it has gone bad. The same thing can happen with relationships. It does not even have to mean that either people are bad. However, it does mean that they are bad for one another.

Sometimes in our society, emotional pain can be inadvertently romanticized. Think about how in TV shows, movies, and books, the most turbulent and unstable relationship is portrayed as the most beautiful one. There is a narrative that no matter what happens, they are always drawn back to one another, which means they are meant to be together. At the end of the story, they will come together for good and all will be well. All of their deep-seated issues will suddenly be resolved and never heard from again, and they will morph into a healthy couple presumably from now on. This will not happen. The issues that have made a relationship toxic in the past will continue to without extreme levels of intervention from a therapist. There is nothing beautiful about causing oneself undue emotional pain that takes away from living with virtue. When you are giving all of your energy to something that refuses to work, you spend all of

your time looking at your phone, arguing with that person, trying to make up with them, and all the while feeling worse about yourself while neglecting all aspects of your health. Emotional suffering will come at the expense of our performance at work. We will be unable to concentrate on anything that is not the source of our stress. At some point, you need to be able to say, “this is taking everything I have and giving me nothing in return. A person who refuses to back down from something that has no hope is not strong. A person who is willing to do what is good for them, even if it hurts for a little while, it truly the strong one.

HOW TO DEAL WITH YOURSELF WHEN LIFE GETS TOUGH

LET'S FACE IT. Sometimes life is not easy. There are days when you can't catch a break. Sometimes, these days cannot be prevented because you will be hit with something that is beyond your control. You are let go from your job. Your significant other breaks up with you. You have an argument with a close friend. You have a fender-bender while driving home. Whatever the circumstance is, it has jostled your emotions. If you sink into this, you are at risk of doing something you will regret later. This is why it is so important not to let yourself get worked up to the point where you can no longer control your emotions.

The first thing you need to do is stop for a moment. Whatever you are doing, drop it just for a little while. If you are talking to someone else, and this is the source of your distress, you definitely need to stop the conversation for a little while. You might think you need to have the argument out now, but you are upset and so are they. The only thing that will happen is that the two of you will become more upset with each other. Just step away from the situation. Do something that calms you down. Go for a run. Listen to music. Write in your journal. Call a friend or family member who you can trust to keep your secrets and vent to them. Let your initial impulses come and go until you can think rationally about the situation.

A common practice among stoics is to brace themselves for the worst-case scenario. The goal in this is not to be pessimistic. It is to be prepared. When you have accepted the worst things that can happen, you will be able to deal with

them and operate under those circumstances. I'm going to drag a theatre motto into this—"The show must go on". When you're putting on a performance, things are going to go wrong. No matter how many times you rehearsed, no matter how much the crew has poured over the lights and setting, there are going to be mistakes made. Even Broadway performances that have turned into well-oiled machines suffer these kinds of mishaps. Someone will forget a line. A prop will be dropped. A setting transition will be a little too early or late. Miscommunications will happen among the sound technicians. However, there is no time to stop and lament about the mistake. This will only cause more mistakes to happen and then it will be apparent to the audience that this play was not well-prepared. Instead, the cast and crew are to improvise in these circumstances.

A stoic does not sink into stress. This is a difficult thing to avoid, especially if you are a person who is more prone to the sensation of anxiety. It might feel like you will not be able to overcome this feeling. When you are feeling overcome by stress, ground yourself. Part of accepting your current circumstances is to not burden yourself with more than what is really happening. This means don't worry about things that haven't happened yet. If your boss hasn't called your performance into question, do not worry about them firing you. If all seems to be going well in your romantic relationship and they haven't said anything that would hint at breaking up with you, trust that it is secure. To make a long story short, don't borrow trouble and create problems for yourself. This takes time away from doing something about the ones you actually have.

A psychological technique that is often used when someone is becoming too emotional is known as mindful grounding. This means you ground yourself into the present whenever you are worried about the past or future. If your focus is on either of those timelines, you are not being mindful, and you are wasting time. To alleviate this, you pull yourself back into the present by focusing on what is happening in the real world. This is done by turning your attention to whatever is around you. Use your senses. If you see a painting in the room, focus on its different colors and patterns. If there is something playing on the television or

radio, listen in. Reach out for an object in your vicinities, such as a pencil, decoration, or even your shirt sleeve, and touch it.

There is also something to faking it until you make it. If you let yourself become consumed by distressing feelings, they are only going to become stronger. If you are going through a time where you are feeling down, you are not going to want to dedicate yourself to self-care, but this is the time where it is the most important. Sometimes you will need to just get up and do something even though you are not feeling the motivation to do it. Spending your time alone in your room, not seeing anyone or putting any effort into your appearance or physical health, is going to make your life feel bleaker as this goes on longer. If you are feeling down about yourself, take a shower or bath. Get dressed, put on makeup if you choose to do so, and generally do the things that make you feel like you look good. You've probably heard the idea that if you look good, you will feel good, and there is truth to it. If you go out somewhere after rolling out of bed and not putting effort into your appearance, you will subconsciously act more timid. Even if someone is interested in talking to you, you will likely avoid them because you are convinced they are starting at a flaw of yours. You will want to just run your errands and get back home, hoping no one notices you. However, when you have dressed up, you will go out putting your best foot forward. You will be comfortable talking to people. In fact, you will probably be bolder than usual. You will show people more of your true personality and therefore establish a stronger connection. You are also living with arete when you do this. You have put time and effort into creating something. In this case, it is your look, which is important in today's world. When you go to an interview for a job, the way you look and present yourself will matter, and advancing in your career is essential to living with virtue.

Next, we're going to talk about stress management. Stress is a common problem for people right now. The fact is that that we are juggling more things than we have in the past. For example, work and school have been changed by the internet. While you have access to more information, it also makes for more things you need to keep track of. Many people have multiple work phones, and

this means they have to keep up with all of their notifications, and in addition, they have to keep an eye out for emails, social media messages, and more. On top of that, there are family responsibilities and anything else a person is involved in. Many people are finding it difficult to stay on top of things and spend a great deal of time wondering how they are going to finish all of their tasks for the day.

All of this points to the fact that you must have a means of stress relief, or you are not going to be able to keep it in check, and therefore your emotions will spiral out of control.

You need to set a time that you are going to think about the things that are bothering you. Once that time is up, you have got to hold yourself to putting all of your worries away. When you continue to feed your anxiety about something, not only are you not actually doing anything about the problem, but you are putting both your physical and mental health at risk. Stress that is prolonged increases in intensity. If it is not alleviated, it can cause you to have a nervous breakdown. You definitely will not make the best judgment calls when you are in this state of mind. It can escalate to panic attacks. When you are experiencing anxiety, your heart rate increases dramatically. Over time this will cause problems with your blood pressure. Some people have even had heart attacks due to stress.

It is easier to manage the problem before it gets to that point than to try to relieve it once you are there. This is why you need to learn to relax and also be able to recognize when you are at your limit and need to take some time to focus solely on your mental health, otherwise known as a mental health day. You've probably heard of these before, and they are actually quite helpful. If you are feeling burned out, putting more pressure on yourself isn't going to do you any favors. Think about how, when your phone's battery runs out, there is nothing more it will be able to do until you put it on the charger. Humans need to recharge. There's only so long that you can "run on fumes" and keep going. It is a lesson in self-preservation and survivability to learn when you have reached your limit.

There are some subtle signs to watch out for before it gets to the point where you're in danger of a breakdown. For one, you're more irritable than usual. Your interactions with people have gotten more confrontational, and you are quick to take things others say as an insult. Stress also causes people to cry more easily. Emotional distress can also manifest through physical symptoms. In particular, you will feel fatigued and taking a nap doesn't help. Stress is tiring on the body because it causes many of its organs to over-function. When you read through these symptoms and relate to them, you are in desperate need of a mental health day.

Make a plan to do it this weekend. The first thing you need to do is unplug. Make yourself unavailable by phone and other media. This way, you have no risk of any drama starting with anyone. After that, there really is no right or wrong way to go about this day. It will start to become intuitive. Your mind and body will tell you what you need. Only think about helping your present self.

One of the most painful and unhelpful things to do for your psyche is to wish for things to be different that have already happened. This is going to be a difficult habit to let go of because we are creatures who want what we want. It begins early in life. As children, we get upset about not having won some contest. As we get older, we have to deal with bigger disappointments, such as someone we have a crush on choosing someone else and another person being picked for a job we wanted. It is easy to feel defeated about these types of disappointments and like they would not have happened if there wasn't something wrong with you. However, this is a form of personalizing something that should be taken with a grain of salt. Sometimes someone will not return the feelings you have for them. If you are turned down for a job, they just have a different personality or skill set in mind. It is not out of personal feelings against you. Sometimes you will want to be a part of a group of friends, and it doesn't work out. It might not even be that they dislike you. You could just not click with them. You are two different people, and so you are not a good fit for them. Someone not wanting to be friends with you does not mean you are unlikable. It just means you are looking in the wrong places for friends. Try finding people whose interests are

more aligned with yours.

We've talked about needing to take responsibility for your actions. No matter how good we try to be, there will still be times where we do something wrong. You will never go through life without doing things that wrong people, and often we cause the most pain when we are trying to not to upset anyone. You are going to hurt someone's feelings at some point, and when you do this, you need to learn to apologize. This is one of the hardest things for anyone to do. We want to think of ourselves as good people, and when we have to admit we have done something hurtful to someone else, that goes against this belief. There is also the natural human instinct to self-protect. It does not make you a bad person. Everyone wants to be the good guy in disagreements. However, you will have to move past this if you want to preserve relationships and live with integrity.

When we do something wrong, we need to apologize to the person whose feelings we have damaged. There is a right and wrong way to apologize, and it is not about the exact verbiage. It is about the spirit in which you give it.

For one, do not give a non-apology. When you are trying to express regret for hurting someone is not the time to voice a grievance you have about them or defend yourself. What I mean when I say a non-apology is one where the ultimate goal is to defend oneself. This could mean shuffling the blame onto the other person, for example, acknowledging you did something wrong but then going on to say it was provoked by them. The best way to avoid doing this is by never, under any circumstances, letting yourself say the words "I'm sorry, but". There is a saying that claims that every word before the word "but" it canceled out by that word. It might come off to the other person like you were only saying that as required etiquette but do not really feel it.

It is best to make the apology short and succinct. Even though your first impulse might be to try to make a speech, if you do this, you will come off as rambling. It might also seem like you are trying to put the focus on you. Just state what you are sorry for. It means more than you might think to a person when you explicitly say what you have done. It not only lets it be known that you know

what you did that was wrong, but it also shows that you are willing to own up to it. It makes the apology feel more sincere than if you talk vaguely about it. It will also give you a sense of feeling like the bandage has been ripped off. You will be able to move on from this incident.

Admit it was wrong to do. Say something that has the effect of “I know I behaved badly there. However, you word it, you are admitting that was not your finest moment, and this will be validating for them. One of the most difficult things for people to deal with is feeling like they did not get closure or that someone who has done something wrong to them does not feel remorse about it. They will not even be as upset about the act itself as they will about the lack of remorse. Your character will be improved in their eyes when you take responsibility for whatever it is that you have done

While you need to admit when you have done wrong, there is a caveat. Make this point briefly and then move on. Do not grovel about this fact or say something like, “I’m such a horrible friend.” You might think it is expressing deep regret or that saying bad things about yourself if a part of taking responsibility, but if you do too much flagellating yourself, it will seem like a manipulative tactic. When someone is doing this, it sets off an instinct in others to ease their pain. This means they will need to be giving comfort to someone else while they are the ones whose feelings need to be tended to.

Stoicism means knowing how to deal when things do not go your way, knowing that the longer you spend lamenting about the disappointment, the longer you will put off doing something to improve your situation. Mourning for what you have lost must come to an end. What has been lost is now in the past, and you need to think about what you have in the present. We talked earlier about sending a job application and having it denied. This is understandably upsetting, but you must pull yourself together and send out another application. That is the only way you are going to be hired by anyone. You can be angry about what happened, insist that the company made a mistake and be kicked down by this, but by the end of all of that you will still need a job. You have to find a way to

become hopeful again as you continue your job hunt. When you send your resume to another company, think of this as another opportunity. The possibility of being hired has come about again. The more you send out, the more you increase your chances of being called back. This is how you can pull yourself out of an unpleasant situation and create your own outcomes.

Another thing that will help you is to ask someone who has been in the workforce for a long time to look at your resume and give you advice on how to make it better. This might feel a little daunting and even embarrassing because when you do this, they will have suggestions and constructive criticisms to give you. This means you will need to humble yourself enough to open yourself up to this. This does not mean that you are admitting to being bad at writing a resume; it means you are invested enough in it that you will call in someone with more experience to guide you. You cannot afford to be prideful in this situation. No one comes out of the gate knowing everything, and candidates who were proceeded with instead of you are not inherently better than you. For all you know, this was the hundredth application they had sent and every other time before that they had been rejected. They'd had to craft and revise the way they presented themselves to potential employers. The first time you go to an interview will not be your best performance. For one, it will be a new experience so you will be nervous. You will not have your plan of how to portray yourself fully rounded out. In fact, for most people, their first try is a debacle. If this is the way it happens for you, do not become discouraged or feel ashamed of yourself. Just figure out what you can do better next time and congratulate yourself for having that first experience being interviewed. Each time this happens, you will learn something new. Eventually, you will no longer be nervous about it because you will have become used to this process. You will also have a better idea of what to do. You will speak more confidently and learn how to give quick and thoughtful answers to questions that you cannot predict.

If you are sending in applications each and every day, going to interviews, and putting all of your effort into it, you are going to get results. The idea that there are people the world favors and ones that nothing ever works out for is false.

This is self-defeating thought that causes people to take their hands off the reins in their own life.

Another common misconception about life is that strength is about who can do the most vicious things. A person who has an unpleasant disposition and is easily annoyed will always say that life is difficult and that you need to be the one who strikes first before they get you. What they do not realize is that they create a lot of their own problems with their confrontational attitude. They make their own life difficult because they turn every interaction they have with another person into a fight. Because they do this, they are constantly having to fight, not realizing they would not have to do this if they did not approach others in a confrontational manner. This is also not the way to handle it when someone does want to start a conflict with you. In fact, that is what we will talk about in our final chapter.

HOW TO HANDLE YOURSELF WHEN OTHER PEOPLE CHALLENGE YOU

It is an uncomfortable thing when you feel like you are being singled out. You will look at other people not currently being treated this way by this person and think it must be something that has only happened to you. However, this is a false assumption. If someone is rude to you, it is not only you that they have done this to.

Everyone struggles with conflict sometimes. We might avoid it or get into it too much, and the latter is just as unhealthy as the former. Having conflicts with others is a part of being human. In fact, a certain amount of it can be productive. When we have disagreements, it gives everyone a chance to tell their side of the story. It is how differences in opinions are smoothed out, and compromises are made. However, there is a healthy and unhealthy way to go about it.

Conflict becomes unhealthy when the participants stop prioritizing coming to a solution and start attacking one another's character. Remember why you are having this conversation with this person. It is not because you dislike them and wish to hurt them. It is because you want to preserve the relationship and therefore reach an agreement. This is when conflict brings a relationship closer when both people see the perspectives of one another and act in a way that meets the needs of both people. This does not mean everyone will get everything they want all the time. It means both people are being considered in the solution instead of one person completely conceding.

One of the things you should not say when you are having a conflict with someone is something to the effect of “you always” or “you never.” This particularly happens when people are having conflicts with their significant others. A frustrated spouse might say, “you never wash the dishes!” or “you’re always on your phone while I’m trying to talk to you!” Even if you have a legitimate gripe and the other person does often do what you are accusing them of, if you word your complaint this way, you will not get the results you want. This is because you did not voice it in a way that they can receive it. They will hear the “always” or “never” part and feel like they are being attacked, and they actually are when this is the approach. When a person is being attacked, they are inevitably going to defend themselves. Their first instinct might be to point out something you do that annoys them, which leads to a completely non-productive conflict where the participants are just throwing darts at one another without hearing what one another is saying. One of the most common reasons people give for a relationship not working out is that they did not feel like they were being heard.

If you want someone to receive your complaint, you need to be direct but not unnecessarily harsh. Here’s what I mean by that. You want to tell them what behavior bothers you—no more, no less. It often helps to put a buffer of sorts in there. For example, you might say, “It hurts my feelings when you use your phone while I’m talking to you.” Then, you are making it clear that you do not dislike them as a person. When you word it in a way like this, you are talking about the problem and not them.

So what do you do if you tell someone something they have done has hurt you and they do not listen? First, there is nothing you can do to change their mindset on that. You need to evaluate this relationship and ask yourself why you are investing time and energy into someone who has shown that they won’t invest in you.

We’ve discussed dealing with people who are willing to work with you towards bettering the relationship. Now we’re going to talk about dealing with those who

do not have this type of concern for others. You are going to come across people in your life who will try to get a rise out of you. They enjoy chaos and create it if they need to. They push the buttons of others trying to get a reaction out of you, and so if you give one to them, they will zero in on you. A person like this will use insults, sarcastic comments, controversial questions, or whatever else they need in order to start a conflict with or between people. When you get into an argument with someone like this, there is no winning it because they just like the conflict. They will purposefully say things they know will make you angry. Often this comes in the form of political and social debates, or other issues that are notorious for making tempers flare-up. They will work at getting you angry, and then when they do, they will flip a switch. They will then get to be seen as the calm and collected one while you are portrayed as the irrational one. They might even say something like, “Who’s the one raising their voice?” To avoid falling into this trap, recognize when this is happening to you as opposed to getting angry about it and reacting based on that. If someone is acting like this, it is absolutely futile to try to have a real relationship with them, and I will tell you why that is.

In life, you are going to deal with people who have personality disorders. In fact, you probably already have met at least one person with one. A particular disorder that has been the subject of a lot of discussions lately is NPD or narcissistic personality disorder. It was named after the Greek mythology character Narcissus, who fell in love with this own reflection. For a long time, when people heard the word “narcissist”, they thought of someone who spends too much time in front of the mirror and takes a large number of pictures of themselves. While a person with this disorder might exhibit those signs, the disorder runs much deeper than that. A narcissist is obsessed with themselves. That is the only person they can really take into equation. Even if they care about another person, they still see them as an extension of themselves and, therefore, will want to control their behavior.

Here are some signs in how to spot a narcissist-

- ***Love-Bombing:*** in the beginning, you are the most important person in the world. They always have time for you and listen to your every word. It's difficult to see this at first because when a person is truly infatuated, they can mimic these signs. A subtle difference to catch onto is that when they are love-bombing you, nothing else is going on in their lives.
- ***Manipulation:*** they are always coming from an angle.
- ***Gaslighting:*** This is more easy to detect in yourself than in their behavior. You will feel like you're going crazy and like you're incompetent. This comes as a result of them telling you an event you remember clearly didn't happen, or not in the way you think it did.

Using stoicism to defend against manipulation of a narcissist will come in handy. It means you will not let their words and actions change your view of yourself. They might try to rewrite history for you, but you can stay confident in your memory. You don't need them to admit to something you know they've done. The best thing you can do is know you are in the right and leave the situation.

Anyone who gets into the inner circle of a narcissist will be subjected to abuse. Even people they have loose interpersonal relationships with, such as coworkers or classmates, will be the target of their narcissistic traits. As you navigate through your professional life, you will need to learn how to deal with a narcissist, because the disorder will more likely than not show up in your work environment. Stoicism can be employed to have the most successful possible relationship with them as possible.

The psychological field has actually already brought stoicism into the discussion of how to deal with narcissists and other malignant personality disorders with a technique known as gray rocking. It gets its name from how you behave using this tactic—you become as dull and uninteresting as a gray rock. Narcissists are looking for an argument. They want to make you become emotional. When the other person is trying to draw you into an argument, you do not respond to their statements, no matter how inflammatory they are. You stick to what you need to talk to them about and end the conversation once you have talked about the

necessary things.

There is one thing you need to remember about individuals with personality disorders. Your conversations with them will always be circular if you allow them to pull you into that. This is sometimes referred to as “word salad”. This tactic is meant to confuse and frustrate you. If you let them, a narcissist will jerk you around all over the place in a conversation. This is why you need to hold your ground. Trying to get them to see your point of view and compromise is futile. By the time a person has developed NPD, they will be incapable of having empathy for you. The only thing you can do is practice self-preservation. If you are reading through this and finding a lot of these signs, remind you of someone you know, your only option for your well-being is to distance yourself from this person.

When you practice stoicism in this situation, you recognize that not every relationship you form is one you will get to keep forever. In fact, there are very few interpersonal relationships that will last throughout your life. Most of the time, these will be familial ties. Friends come and go, and that is a natural part of life. It isn’t a failure on your part if a friendship or other relationship doesn’t work out. Sometimes relationships were good at one time, but now they have gone sour. Do not use the former good times as a reason to stay in a situation that is hurting your spirit. You can take the positive with you and leave the negative behind.

A stoic also picks their battles. You do not need to justify yourself to everyone. Sometimes people will ask you to explain yourself when it isn’t warranted. For example, someone asks you why you are wearing a certain combination of outfit and shoes. You do not owe it to them to struggle to come up with an explanation that will satisfy them. The fact that they do not agree with your fashion choices does not mean you need to change your look.

This is also where standing your ground comes in. People with manipulative personalities can spot an easy target, meaning people who do not have strong beliefs and the self-esteem required to have them. For your sake, you need to

keep from giving the impression of yourself as being too agreeable and willing to compromise yourself for someone else—meaning you will go back on how you expect to be treated to have them in your life. Say you want the people in your life to not call you names. If you have a friend who is doing this to you, they are not holding up to your standards. At this point, you will need to stand your ground and keep your expectations where they should be. This means holding onto the belief that you should not be called names.

Another problem that will come for everyone at least once in their life is a smear campaign. We've talked about narcissists and their tactics while you're in their inner circle. A smear campaign is something they often do when you leave or challenge them. This is when they aim to destroy a person's reputation by spreading lies and rumors about them. A common angle they go for is to get everyone to think they are crazy. If they manage this, what that person says about them is not credible. This is one of the scariest things that can happen to you because you feel like everyone is turning against you. Your impulse might be to try and defend yourself by telling your side of the story. You might even feel tempted to retaliate by telling others things you know about that person. However, when you do that, you're doing exactly what they wanted you to do. Their goal is to launch an attack on your character. If you behave in a way that confirms what they are saying about you, then they win.

The best thing to do when you are being hit with a smear campaign is to not act. You are not taking it lying down when you do this. You are turning the tables on them. They launched this campaign to make others question your sanity and/or character. People will grow tired of hearing them talk about you, and if you do not respond to their comments, it will be you that comes off as the rational one. Meanwhile, they will be the one who seems vindictive and is rambling on about something that does not come with any proof. Remember this. What one person says about you is not what everyone else thinks about you. Being the one talking the loudest does not mean being the majority.

Another thing you will need to be prepared for when you are disentangling

yourself from a narcissist is using threats of self-harm or suicide to manipulate you. This is a very sinister practice because we've been taught to always take these sorts of claims seriously, and make no mistake about it—a narcissist is using that fact against you. If you are trying to ignore the person and they are messaging you incessantly, they will likely eventually use this tactic, so you need to be prepared for this. These threats are meant to take advantage of your emotions so you will respond to them. You might even think, "I'm upset with them, but I don't want them to die, and I would never forgive myself if they actually went through with it." Stop right there if you are having thoughts like these because it means their manipulation is working. Put the emotional response to what they are saying aside for a moment and scroll back up a few messages. They were most likely insults, which were shortly preceded by begging for you to reply and promising things will be different from now on. Those two behaviors were tactics. This one is no different.

For this, we need to backtrack to the point that you are not responsible for what someone else says or does. When someone is using threats of self-harm to manipulate you, you have to keep this in mind. If you feel like they might truly hurt themselves, you can contact authorities who can do something about it, but that needs to be the end of what you do. To hold that over your head as a means of controlling you is a form of bullying, which is a behavior that needs more discussion in adulthood.

We've all had bullies. The behavior starts early in school; however, it is a widely-held and false belief that it ends in school. In the workplace and all throughout your life, there will be times where someone decides for whatever reason that they want to single you out to persecute. The first thing you need to realize is that this is not your fault that they are doing this to you. Bullies have a compulsion to harass people. In the end, picking you as a target was fairly random for them. If you were not there, they would be doing it to someone else.

You have to learn how not to be a doormat to others. I would never claim that someone brings bullying and persecution onto themselves. However, there are

ways you can behave that can negate this. There are also ways to make an already inflammatory situation worse. For one, do not lose your cool around this person. If they know they can push your buttons, they will remember this.

When you are standing up for yourself, you need to be authoritative. If you sound like you are begging or pleading, this person will know they have the upper hand. On the other hand, you do not want to be completely confrontational. The reason for this is that they might use this as leverage against you. For one, you are losing it like they want you to. This could also be evidence they use to paint you as the one who started it. At this point, you are being baited, and while your words and actions might just be the product of the heat of the moment, you will still be held accountable. Let them know in an even tone that their opinion of you is of no consequence.

As a stoic, you need to look at the situation from an objective point of view. Ask yourself, “What will I gain if I respond to this?” This person is not worth it. Even if they think something of you for not responding, even if they tell people you are weak or cowardly, so what? Why should you care what some random people think about you? Your ability to go through life with your sanity intact will depend on your ability to ignore things other people will say about you. You are not the only person people talk about. It happens to everyone. People gossip when they have nothing better to do. Sometimes, they will gossip and spread rumors about someone they have never even met before. If you refuse to engage in a destructive conversation, you come out the more powerful one.

One of the most important things you need to learn is that you will never have everyone’s approval. No matter what decisions you make, there will be someone with something negative to say about it. This does not mean you have made a bad decision. The truth is that people have a tendency to make judgments about a situation without knowing all of the facts about it. This is not to speak ill of people; however, the fact remains that everyone is guilty of this. Sometimes we speak from our own experience and project that onto another person’s situation, even if the two are not the same. For example, someone comes to their friend for

advice about possibly entering a new relationship with someone they had dated before. Their friend immediately shuts down the idea and forbids them to do it. This comes from their own experience because they tried that once and it did not work out. This person is not being a good friend because they are using this time that is supposed to be about someone else to vent about their own problems. When you think about it this way, they are not commenting on your situation at all because they never shifted the focus away from theirs. This is why you should not change your decision based on this. You should never make a decision you do not want to just because of what someone else says. You can take their advice into consideration and see that they may have some points. However, if you immediately change your course because someone says you need to, you will always be running around in circles.

You not doing something someone wants you to do is not you showing them a lack of respect. It also does not mean you did not listen to them. I said before that you have to learn to stand your ground. You have to be your own person to be living with virtue. If you are letting someone else decide what is going to happen in your life, you are living by someone else's core values, not your own. If you have a person in your life who tries to micromanage you, you have got to learn to tell them that while you care about them, you are going to make your own decisions.

That concludes what stoicism is. You stick to your principles. Your decisions are born out of an internal place, and so is your happiness. You hold yourself to upholding these behaviors. That is, essentially, a breakdown of what stoicism is. So there you have it. You have everything you need to create your own happiness and decide how you are going to think, feel, and therefore behave. Remember that your fate is always in your hands.

CONCLUSION

Being stoic might seem like a daunting task, but it is simpler than you might think. Actually, a large part of it is just letting go of worries that are only bringing you down. When you focus on things outside of your control or let someone else ruin your day, you're carrying baggage that isn't yours. Stoicism is saying, "I'm not going to do this. I'm better than this."

If you keep these lessons in your mind and repeat them, you will be able to stay calm no matter what. When you can let rude comments from others go, be content with what you have now and let outside events happen as they will, you will be able to start focusing on the things you can control. Instead of waiting for opportunities, you will start creating them for yourself.

Remember, your initial emotional reactions to things are just noise. They are fleeting and not in line with your core values. When a situation starts upsetting you, back away from it for a moment and take a breath. Give yourself some time to cool off before you respond. Not every stimulus requires an immediate response.

Wherever you're at in life right now is okay. Instead of agonizing over what you wish you had, which only leads to feeling unhappy, try using what you already have to take the steps you can toward where you want to be. When the day is done, let it go for now. Let everything be in place where it is now.

MANIPULATION
TECHNIQUES
Emotional Manipulation
KATHRIN DESHOTELS

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on purchasing *Manipulation Techniques*, and thank you for doing so.

When we want someone to do something, it can be frustrating when they decide to take another route. But with the skills and knowledge that come from neurolinguistic programming, or NLP, you won't have to worry about this problem anymore.

NLP is the often shunned psychology of mind reading, mind control, and behavior manipulation. Mainstream psychologists don't want to affiliate themselves with NLP because of the negative connotation that all of these forms of emotional manipulation can carry. By choosing to study the human science that allows us to look inside someone's mind and change what we find there, you are stepping into territory that many willfully ignore.

In these pages, you will learn how to get anyone to do what you think they should — all it takes is a solid grasp of the mechanisms of the human unconscious mind. We can all benefit from learning the skills of neurolinguistic programming, as it gives us the tools to transform our desired thought patterns, behaviors, and emotions into our actual thought patterns, behavior, and emotions.

Self-help books on the market will tell you that you can do whatever you set your mind to, but our book takes this further. We know that we have the capacity

to reshape our minds because of our current understanding of the human brain. We will spend time looking over the neuroscience behind the NLP, which both ultimately make us unstoppable emotional manipulators.

But you aren't only reading because you want to change yourself. Thankfully, with the same principles of NLP that allow us to reshape our own minds, we can shape others' minds. Look no further than *Manipulation Techniques* to learn the neural mechanisms that make this possible in vivid detail.

Discover the most powerful and highly effective techniques for improving your control of language — not just the literal language of sentences and words, but the language of the body, the language of eye contact, the language of the mind, and more. As our communication skills improve, so will your confidence level.

There are plenty of books on this subject in the market, thanks again for choosing this one! Every effort was made to ensure it is full of as much useful information as possible; please enjoy!

THE FOUNDATIONS OF EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

WE CAN MANIPULATE people's minds by simply conveying thoughts and feelings in a specific way. This chapter marks the beginning of your journey to learn the specific manner in which we communicate with people to manipulate them emotionally. There are a great number of ways we can manipulate people, but the most effective and consistent method is toying with their emotions.

Emotions are the most powerful tools of communication, and yet most of us act like we cannot control them. We are not only in control of our emotions — we can look inside ourselves and use the wisdom we find to manipulate others.

Even in emotional manipulation, being able to control emotion in ourselves and others is not enough. Successful emotional manipulators have a strong comprehension of all of the foundations of emotional manipulation — and control over emotion is just one of these foundations.

In total, there are seven foundations of emotional manipulation. In this chapter, we will give you a summary of each of them and tell you how they fit into emotional manipulation as a whole. Keep in mind that we will go into far greater detail later on — for now, you just have to know what the seven foundations are.

The First Foundation: State Control

The first foundation of emotional manipulation is state control. Don’t

be misled by the word “state” in this term — it could just as easily be called emotional control, and it would be the same idea. We call it state control in this book only because this is the official name for it in neurolinguistic programming. If you are unfamiliar with the world of NLP, don’t worry about that yet, because we will give you a rundown pretty soon.

As we said, there is much to learn about each of these foundations, so we won’t be covering them in heavy detail in Chapter 1. Here, you will get just an overview of state control and how it fits into emotional manipulation. The rest of the sections in this chapter will also be mere overviews of the concepts that we explain in depth in later chapters. There is plenty more to come about how you achieve state control, why it is essential to NLP, and how to control the emotional states of another person.

Before you can understand state control the way we cover it, you do need a good enough idea of what NLP is. The easiest way you can get a grasp of it is by looking at each part of the term: “neuro,” “linguistic,” “programming.”

“Neuro” means brain. One of the foundations of emotional manipulation is neuroscience, the science of the brain. NLP is the discipline of reading and controlling minds — that is, brains.

“Linguistic” means language. It isn’t only the language of words, however. In NLP, we are interested in both verbal and nonverbal language, but on a deeper level, we only want to know these forms of language so we can decipher the more important language: the language of the mind. Emotional manipulators who pick up their talents from NLP do so by learning how to speak and understand the language of the mind.

“Programming” is where the manipulation part comes in. It isn’t exactly the kind of programming we usually think of involving computers and coding, although that isn’t as far off as you might think.

When we “program” something, it means we are setting it to do something we want it to do. For example, when we program a computer program to display the

time in analog form, this is what it will do. NLP is as powerful as it is because it allows us to “program” other people’s brains (“neuro”) by speaking in the language (“linguistic”) of their minds.

Now that we have broken down the term NLP into its parts, its definition should seem apparent. In short, practitioners of NLP speak the language of the human mind to reprogram it; however, they see fit.

We have only scratched the surface of what NLP can do, but for now, just know that NLP is a branch of dark psychology that empowers us to emotionally manipulate people.

That brings us back to state control. State control is the skill you must learn if you want to emotionally manipulate people effectively. In fact, without proper state control, you can’t expect to succeed in any of the techniques possible with NLP — be it mind reading, mind control, or behavior manipulation.

If you checked out other sources for information about neurolinguistic programming or manipulation, you were sure to run into the term “state control” before. To avoid any potential confusion, we should clear something up from the start.

In most cases, state control is used to talk about the art of controlling one’s own emotional state. NLP instructors usually teach state control as your capacity for keeping down the emotions you feel naturally and replacing them with expressions of emotions that will help you manipulate your subject. (Throughout the book, we will use the term “subject” for the person you are emotionally manipulating.)

Our book is about NLP and the manipulation techniques possible through it, but we focus specifically on the practice of manipulating a person’s emotions. That means when we talk about state control here, we aren’t only talking about controlling our own state. We are also referring to controlling someone else’s.

After all, this is our ultimate goal in learning the techniques of emotional

manipulation. We don’t only want to restrict our emotional expression to whatever will help us manipulate the subject. We also want to have control over the emotional state the subject is experiencing. By learning this skill, we can find out what is going through their mind, change what we find there, and get them to do what we want. This is the essence of emotional manipulation.

There is really only one rule to follow if you want to master state control. Follow this rule, and you can mold your emotions or anyone else’s like putty. It is this: emotion is not an unavoidable reaction, even though it can feel this way. Emotion is actually your brain’s active resistance against things it cannot control.

Despite how they may feel, your emotions are not something you passively experience without being able to do anything about it. Emotions are what it feels like in the experience of mentally resisting something outside of our control.

We will back up for a moment because there is a lot to break down here. Standard definitions are a good place to start. First of all, we have to establish that emotions and feelings are not the same things.

Scientifically, in the jargon of medicine and psychology, emotions are one’s body’s physical reactions to something. Emotions are not the way you subjectively feel when you are angry, depressed, excited, joyful, or stressed. In scientific terms, emotions are your racing heartbeat when you get frustrated with your boss. Emotions are the goosebumps rising on your arms when you are scared. They are the shallow way we breathe when we are nervous.

Feelings are something else. The term “feelings” captures the subjective experience that comes with our emotions. This one is easier to understand because we all know what they are. Most people may not know how they come about from the perspective of the human brain, but they know what feelings are because they are such a huge part of life.

The key fact that makes state control possible is that people *actively* bring about emotions in response to something we cannot control. Now, realize why this must be true for state control to be possible at all. If emotions were something

that simply happened to us with none of our participation whatsoever, state control would be out of the question.

But even if you have never heard of the term before, you already know that state control is possible from your experience of growing up. When you were a child, you had temper tantrums, just like all children do. You would cry uncontrollably; you couldn't control the volume of your voice in public when you were excited. Everyone is like this when they are children. As we mature, we all have to learn some state control. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to function in society.

How do we come to grow out of not being able to temper our emotions as children? We learn that some things are out of our control. Many things, actually. We don't get to have dessert for every meal just because we want to; we aren't allowed to watch movies all night, because our parents say we aren't allowed to.

People often think something changes in the "emotional part of the brain" when we grow up, but the fact is, neuroscientists have discovered no such thing. As far as science is concerned, there is no "emotional center of the brain." It isn't that our brains develop to stop having as many chemical reactions that cause anger, sadness, overexcitement, or any other emotion. It's that we become more used to things being out of our control as we get older.

Think about the last time you got very angry. If nothing comes to mind right away, the easiest example is getting cut off in traffic. You are driving on the highway and see your exit; you're about to change lanes to get onto your exit, when out of nowhere a car speeds in front of you and blocks your way. You don't want to get in an accident, so you have to miss your exit. All of us have been in a similar situation before, even if we have never taken to the road. It is a basic life experience to have a stranger disrespect us like this.

When this happened, you were sure to get mad. Unless you are an easily irritated person, it isn't just getting cut off that makes you mad. It's all the frustrations you were dealing with before. Your co-worker took the credit for something you did earlier that day; you had a bad headache ever since you woke up; the water

bill was much more than you expected. On top of all these small annoyances, someone cut you off before you could merge onto the exit that takes you home, and now you have to drive an extra ten miles before you can get out of your car.

Try to think of a bad day you've had similar to this one. Now, think of it in the scientifically-backed terms that we have laid out instead of seeing your emotions that day as "uncontrollable reactions."

Your brain didn't make more chemicals that cause anger when your co-worker took credit for your accomplishment — you were mentally resisting what happened because you couldn't do anything about it physically. Theoretically, you could have mentioned that you were the one who did it, but that would make you seem petty and difficult. Because of unwritten social rules, it was outside out of your control. You couldn't do anything to actually change the situation, so your brain resisted it, causing all the tension that results in the subjective feeling of anger.

Your brain didn't suddenly make new chemicals when you saw the expensive water bill. You knew that you couldn't magically do anything to make the bill lower, so you mentally resisted it. The resulting tension gave you the subjective feeling of anger.

When you were cut off and missed your lane, it was just the same. There is nothing scientific research to back up the idea that being cut off triggered a part of your brain that controls your emotions. What actually happened is you mentally resisted the fact that you were cut off — that is, you wanted this uncontrollable event not to happen, but it did happen, causing physical tension in your brain. That physical tension is the subjective feeling of emotion, whether it is sadness, anger, excitement, or glee.

Since it happens in your brain, you might be tempted to think you still can't do anything about it. But you can't let this be an excuse: you are the actor who controls all things that happen in your brain. Emotions happen when you actively resist things in your life that can't be changed; if you don't want to

experience these emotions, *stop actively resisting things in your life that can't be changed*.

Even once you fully understand the fact that emotions are something you create and not something you passively experience, it doesn't mean state control becomes easy. Like anything in emotional manipulation and NLP, it takes time and practice to get right. But the sooner you accept the fact that you are the instigator of every emotion in your brain, the sooner you will be an expert in state control.

But that only covers the intellectual side of your own state control. In Chapter 5, we will go much deeper into this rich topic. You will learn several methods that will help you achieve state control after you accept the fact that emotions are the result of actively resisting what you cannot control. You will learn more about the neuroscience behind the "resistance" we speak of.

We have also not yet explored the endless possibilities available to you once you can control another person's emotional states. As this is the primary issue of the book, it is something you study from multiple different angles throughout these pages.

Don't think you know enough about state control to manipulate people after reading this short section, because there are still plenty of techniques and concepts to familiarize yourself with. Now that you have a grasp of the first foundation of emotional manipulation, it is time to learn the second: sensory acuity.

The Second Foundation: Sensory Acuity

Out of all the foundations of emotional manipulation, sensory acuity is the one that has the most use outside of mind reading, mind control, and behavior manipulation. It doesn't matter what kind of person you are, where you live, or what your job is. If you hone your sensory acuity, it will help you in

every aspect of your life.

That’s because sensory acuity is simply the aptitude of your senses. The better you can smell, taste, feel, hear, and see, the sharper your sensory acuity is. But this is only the general definition of sensory acuity. In the context of emotional manipulation and NLP, sensory acuity will make the difference between changing the subject’s behavior successfully and failing to understand their motives completely.

Effectively getting into someone’s unconscious mind is often a matter of having enough information about them. Now, we aren’t saying that information is the only thing that matters. Every foundation of emotional manipulation is crucial if you want to change someone’s emotions in a way that benefits you. However, while it isn’t sufficient to know everything possible about the subject, it is necessary.

When people study the guiding principles of NLP, practice its techniques, and still fail, it is almost always because they didn’t know their subject well enough. You can do everything right besides sensory acuity, and it won’t be enough.

You see, emotional manipulation may not be as complicated as you might think, but you still have to follow along with all the little things to succeed in it. Sensory acuity is one of those things.

We put sensory acuity together with something called intel gathering. Intel gathering is nothing more than the information you get about the subject: everything you learn about them helps you in the long-term goal of manipulating them. Some things might seem to matter little at the time, but bringing something up they mentioned can turn out to be the tipping point that gets them on your side. Once they are on your side, playing with their emotions is easy. For this reason, intel gathering is paramount to successful NLP.

While intel gathering is the goal, sensory acuity is the means by which we achieve it. Use your nose to gain olfactory information. If they are the kind of person who always smells like perfume or cologne, you can infer things about

them from that. If their voice sounds off, it probably tells you something is going wrong for them that day. Investigate the cause of the voice change and use it to your advantage. The list goes on, but the short version is this: the more you pay attention to the information your senses give you, the easier time you will have with NLP.

Then, there is the matter of how you sharpen your senses once you know how important they are in the task of manipulating someone. The key to doing this is not forcing your senses with your conscious mind.

Your senses already know what they are doing. If you know consciously that you want them to pay extra close attention to your subject, they will do this on their own. But if you keep pushing your senses into your conscious level of thought, this will hinder your sensory acuity, not sharpen it.

This is all to say not to overthink your senses. They already know how to see, hear, feel, and so forth without you dictating their every move. When you try to control everything your senses do, it makes them perform worse. All you have to do consciously on your part is remind yourself to pay attention with your senses before you spend time with the subject. From there, it will all come naturally. You will let your senses guide you instead of trying to guide them.

In our book, we go further with the senses — after you examine the human mind enough, the fact that we rely on more than five senses becomes apparent.

We don’t have just a sixth sense, either. It is hard to put a concrete number on it, but we certainly have a dozen or more senses. Chapter 5 is where you will learn the developed skills of state control and sensory acuity in more detail, but while you are already thinking about the senses and how they will help you in your journey in emotional manipulation, we will list some of the other senses.

The easiest way to remember these other senses is through association with the main five senses. Our first is empathy. You can associate this extra sense with touch because of the way you feel closer to someone when you touch them. You might not think of it as a sense, but consider what makes a sense a sense — your

smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight are all senses because they are your means of getting information about the world. Empathy fulfills this requirement of a sense.

When we listen to someone tell a story about their day, we put ourselves in their shoes. We think about what it would be like to be like them. When we dive into persuading people with our words in Chapter 7, you will explore neuroscience in detail because of what it can surprisingly teach us about how to speak persuasively. We bring this up now because our lessons on neuroscience will take us to the topic of mirror neurons, which are the biological mechanism of empathy. Look forward to that chapter if you really want to hone your sense of empathy.

Our next sense can be associated with taste because it also uses your mouth. This is the sense of verbal language. You might think of spoken speech as something you put into the world yourself rather than a sense in its own right, but consider how we experience other people talking.

If we are paying attention, the meaning of their words comes to us naturally. We don’t think hard about what each of their words mean. We simply absorb the information just like we would absorb the scent of a rose through our sense of smell or a solo played by an oboe through our hearing. This is what makes verbal language a sense, as well.

Now, we did say that each extra sense could be associated with one of the five traditional senses, but this next sense is an exception. It does not fit perfectly with taste, but it is the other side of the coin for verbal language. This is the sense of nonverbal language.

The other foundations of emotional manipulation go into this subject in greater detail; the other foundations also go into verbal language in more detail. Later chapters dive deeper into these subjects as well. In the context of sensory acuity, know that the sense of nonverbal language is how we get information from the subject’s eye contact, posture, body language, tone of voice, and of course,

emotion. These are only the main areas of nonverbal communication — there can be others. Just like with the sense of verbal language, this one is a sense because we get information from it unconsciously, without even thinking about it.

When someone’s voice suddenly gets softer, we take that to mean they are telling us something private. When someone has been slouching and straightens their posture around us, we can tell they are trying to appear more confident. These are pieces of information we get through nonverbal communication that we do not work for — since it is a sense, our nonverbal communication picks up on it for us unconsciously.

Our next extra sense is similar to our sense of smell. Think of what your nose does: you can use it to tell when food is spoiled, to detect when something is burning, or to know if someone smokes because of the smell of tobacco on their breath. The sense of smell often goes less appreciated than it should be, but when you think about it, it is the sense that ties us the most to our instinctual, animalistic side.

Maybe this is why the sense is frequently neglected as a means of obtaining information — because we want to think of ourselves as better than animals. But the truth is, animals can use their senses in a much more advanced way then we can. For example, bats and dolphins use echolocation to observe their surroundings by sending out small sound waves and detecting how they come back.

It isn't very good or useful for us humans, but we technically can use echolocation. Echolocation is nothing more than feeling sound instead of hearing it. To test this out, put your hand a decent distance in front of your face and speak towards it at a good volume (you might not want to do this when other people are around, of course). You were able to feel the sound waves on your hand separately from the mere air from your breath.

We bring up echolocation because it is one of the many senses humans have that

they don't realize. So far, we have gone over the extra senses of empathy, verbal language, and nonverbal language. The one linked to your smell can be called instinct.

Your instinct is your basic gut feeling. It is a sense because it can give us information without us putting any conscious effort into it. While gut feelings can be useful to a life-saving degree, it can also be the easiest to misinterpret. Indeed, sometimes our gut feeling may think that something is wrong based on a bias or a misunderstanding — but you can still use it as part of your sensory acuity toolkit as long as you are aware of its imperfection.

The second-to-last extra sense we will get into can be associated with your hearing. It is easy to hear and understand the literal meaning of words, but what can be harder is understanding deeper meaning and subtext. Now, it might sound like we are getting into an English literature lesson — but the truth is, knowing the deeper meanings and subtexts of things is useful in real life too. We can call this extra sense, insight.

Insight can help you considerably in emotional manipulation. Where a lot of NLP aspirants go wrong is taking this extra sense to mean "trying to sound smart." This is not what the sense of insight is about at all.

Honing your insight gets easier as you learn more about NLP because as you get deeper into this forbidden discipline, you realize the implications of the similar structure of individual human brains. There is still plenty of time for you to go deep into this sense, but we can give you the basics while you are here.

Think about what happens when someone tells a joke. They will have a punchline at the end that everyone laughs at. Believe it or not, the sense of insight comes into play in this interaction. Everyone laughs at the joke because they see the layer of meaning beneath the surface, and that’s where the humor comes from. If you can only understand the literal meaning of things — if you don’t have much of a sense of insight — you don't understand many jokes, because you don’t understand the significance.

A good joke-teller knows what references or subtexts the listeners will pick up on. They can't explicitly say what the subtext is, because then it wouldn't be subtext, which totally ruins the humor that results when you realize what the deeper meaning is, and laugh.

Take the following joke:

What did the Buddhist say to the hot dog vendor?

Make me one with everything.

Notice how insight is required for someone to laugh at this joke. You need to understand two things: that people can order hot dogs with "everything," and that Buddhists believe in the interconnectedness of everything.

In examples like this, we can see how insight seems too natural that we don't even think of it as insight. We just think of it as obvious. In fact, you might look at this joke and think it doesn't sound like insight at all. You might think, *Everyone knows what a hotdog with everything is, and everyone knows why a Buddhist would say something like that. This isn't insight.*

But it is insight; it is just insight so tightly woven into your psyche that you don't even think of it as a deeper subtext. With the hot dog vendor, remember that the only literal thing we know about them is they are a person who sells hot dogs somewhere. We don't know anything else from this surface-level definition of a hot dog vendor. It is insight to know what makes up a hot dog "with everything" means; the joke is funny because it takes a commonly used expression that has a different meaning when coming out of a Buddhist's mouth.

With the Buddhists, it's more obvious why insight is required to understand the joke. Someone who didn't know anything about Buddhist beliefs wouldn't think the joke was funny at all because they would just think they were ordering

another hot dog with everything on it.

A well-developed sense of insight will help you understand what your subtext is trying to tell you when they aren't explicit about it. If you pay attention to your own behavior, you will catch times when you are talking to people, and you want to tell them something, but you can’t tell them outright because you are embarrassed or for some other reason. Other people want to tell you things, too, and if you aren’t paying enough attention to your sense insight, you will just miss it.

There are certain extra senses besides the ones we cover in this book, but these are the ones that will help you the most in NLP. The last one we cover is simply your sense of imagination. You will realize the full potential of your imagination when you read more about the different networks of the brain when we get deeper into neuroscience.

For now, you should know that your imagination is much more than the way you imagined fairy tale creatures and imagined being a grown-up when you played house as a kid. When you get down to the details of the brain, you learn that imagination is anything your brain does in a network called the default mode network.

As we said, there is a lot to learn about the brain that you are not ready for yet. But the default mode network is the opposite of your other main network, the executive functioning network. Your default mode network is where you think about what will happen later, what has already happened in your life, how you think about yourself, how you think about others, and how you think about the world.

The executive functioning network is the opposite of the default mode network because it is the network of your brain that deals with everything in the moment. When you ride a bike, you are using your executive functioning network, because it is made to do things , not think about things. You don’t only use the executive functioning network for movement, though. You use it for anything

that requires you to pay attention to the task at the moment. That includes reading and listening, too.

One way to think about it is this: when you are reading a book, your executive functioning network is the network that is doing the work of taking in the words as pieces of information. Your default mode network is what you use to take these pieces of information and put meaning to them. The default mode is also where you form your own thoughts about what you are reading. Do you think the story is good? Bad? What do you think about the actions of the main character? And so on.

You may be wondering what we mean when we call the default mode and executive functioning networks. We won't use this section to talk much about the microscopic structure of the brain. It is actually rather simple: your brain is a mass made from billions of neurons (brain cells) connected to one another with links called synapses. But these synaptic connections between your neurons are not equally distributed to all areas of the brain. Networks are parts of your brain that are highly connected because they are responsible for a certain task.

The executive functioning network is highly connected with synaptic connections that help you pay attention to tasks in the moment. The default mode network is responsible for making connections when you think about yourself, the world, the future, and so forth.

There are other networks too, and we will get into those later. But we bring up the default mode network and the executive functioning network because of the role the default mode plays in imagination. Your executive functioning is also important to talk about because it is the direct opposite of your imagination.

Another clear way to separate these two networks is by looking at the idea of awareness. When you are using your executive functioning to clean yourself in the shower or when you sort laundry, you are aware of the self-cleaning or the laundry sorting.

For our purposes right now, let's say you aren't thinking about anything else

while you are doing these things. You are simply “in the zone” while you are taking a shower and sorting your laundry. This is your executive functioning in its purest form. You aren’t thinking about anything else, so you are only *aware* of the task you are doing.

The default mode isn’t responsible for your awareness of the tasks you are doing in the real world. Instead, it is responsible for mapping out your abstract thoughts and making them stronger when you use them more. We already told you what kinds of things you think about with your default mode, so take a guess at what kind of awareness you achieve with the default mode.

If you guessed self-awareness, you are right. Your executive functioning is the physical network being used in your brain when your awareness — your conscious experience — is the task you are doing. Your default mode network is being used when your awareness is the thoughts you are having about your life, who you are, philosophical questions, the past, and so on. To put it simply, your executive functioning network is used when you are in a state of awareness, while your default mode network is being used when you are in a state of self-awareness.

There is still a lot to talk about on this subject, but for now, we have to return to how the default mode network works into your sense of imagination. And this is something that ties all of your senses together, both the traditional senses and the extra ones.

The reason your sensory acuity is so crucial to your effective manipulation is that your executive functioning network and your default mode network both speak the same language. They may perform very different tasks, but there is one thing they both use in exactly the same way: senses.

Sensation is the language both your default mode network and executive functioning speak. That means to become gifted in the extra sense of imagination. You have to bring in senses you experience through your executive functioning and imagine experiencing them again with your default mode

network.

Every sense we cover here matters a great deal, but your sense of imagination is the one you always have to use as an emotional manipulator. If you didn't use your imagination, you wouldn't be able to mind read, mind control, or manipulate anyone. They would simply enter your awareness through your executive functioning, and nothing about them would change.

When you want to change something about a person's beliefs or behaviors, you have to use your imagination to see how they could be different. If you can't imagine what you want our results with the subject to be, you won't be able to change them at all. Imagination is the sense an emotional manipulator uses to establish a vivid goal for themselves when it comes to how they want the subject to change.

We connect this extra sense to the traditional sense of vision because both senses share this vividness. While there are sensations you can experience with all the other senses that can be intense, sight and imagination are the two senses that fully captivate us. This is why TV shows, movies, video games, and all visual media are so addicting. Their vividness is absolutely hypnotizing; even though all these senses must come together for you to have strong sensory acuity, this vividness is something that only vision and imagination can accomplish.

Besides envisioning your goal with the subject, there is a second important use for imagination. Not only do you have to use your own imagination to see how the subject can change: you need to capture your subject's imagination. You need to make them see how they could be different. Once you accomplish this, your job as a manipulator comes easily. There is a lot more to come about how you can capture the subject's sense of imagination in this book, so keep reading to learn more.

We will go into greater detail on how to develop all the senses: both the traditional five senses and the extra senses. Now, you have a good idea of sensory acuity before getting into the third foundation. The third foundation is

unconscious communication, making our discussion of the sensory acuity a perfect segue.

While you need excellent state control and sensory acuity to even get started with emotional manipulation, unconscious communication gets into the first real stage of practicing NLP on your subject. It is the stage in which you are currently in conversation with them; when you sharpen your sensory acuity and develop your state control, this should be done before you ever attempt to emotionally manipulate the subject. They are the first foundations for a reason.

But unconscious communication is the foundation you are ready for once you have developed these skills to a significant degree. With that said, we will move onto the third foundation of emotional manipulation.

The Third Foundation: Unconscious Communication

Before you can use the tools of unconscious communication we are about to give you, you have to know what unconscious communication is. In short, unconscious communication is all the messages we send people without knowing explicitly; we are telling them these messages.

In the area of unconscious communication, there are two categories: verbal unconscious communication and nonverbal unconscious communication.

Your extra senses of unconscious communication, both verbal and nonverbal, will improve as you learn the messages that people send with all these different cues. We will go deep into the kinds of nonverbal and verbal unconscious communication as we advance through the book.

At first, your sense of these things will be relatively weak, unless you already have a natural talent for understanding these cues as some people do. This means you will likely have to put a lot more thought into interpreting unconscious cues of communication when you are early on in the learning process. But the more time you spend learning the messages that are being sent, and the more time you

spend accurately interpreting the subject's unconscious cues of communication, the better this sense will become — the more you will be able to understand what they are telling you unconsciously without telling you explicitly.

As you might expect, this foundation of emotional manipulation comes from the "linguistic" part of neurolinguistic programming. We are not only interested in identifying the meanings of the various unconscious cues that people use. In fact, as useful as this knowledge can be, it is far less important than the other purpose of learning unconscious communication. This is the purpose that makes unconscious communication one of the foundations of emotional manipulation.

This purpose is to use the same cues that the subject is using. When we use the same cues of unconscious communication that the subject uses, it causes them to unconsciously incorporate us into their minds. They forget that you are two separate people; in layman's terms, they get comfortable with you.

Now, they may not consciously know that they are comfortable around you. Their explicit mind might have neutral feelings about you. But in NLP, changing the unconscious mind is the most important thing for us to do, and using the same cues of unconscious communication as the subject will make them see you as a part of themselves. From there, you can mind read, mind control, or manipulate them.

We are getting into the territory of our sixth and second-to-last foundation of emotional manipulation: imitation. Therefore, we will not spend too much space here, talking more about imitating unconscious cues. Besides, you will not be ready to dive into the sixth foundation until you know all of the different cues we give people without even realizing it. In Chapter 5, we will cover these cues in more depth, as this third foundation of emotional manipulation is an integral developed skill if you want to succeed in NLP manipulation.

In this section, we will layout the landscape of unconscious communication and clue you in on the fundamental ideas behind it. This will make you more than prepared for reading about the most important cues and help you develop more

of a mind for unconscious communication.

It may cover fewer modes of communication than nonverbal unconscious communication, but if you have strong skills in verbal unconscious communication, you will pick up the rest of NLP naturally. It is common for NLP instructors to neglect this area of unconscious communication. In fact, usually, only nonverbal communication is taught. The "unconscious" part of these cues is completely ignored, and the sheer power of words is forgotten.

We will surely get to nonverbal unconscious communication in just a moment, but this book does not make the mistake of not teaching how to use words. Nonverbal cues are no more or less powerful than verbal cues. Both categories of unconscious communication are necessary to learn if you want to be a master emotional manipulator.

To start out, let's look at why unconscious nonverbal communication is usually just called nonverbal communication by other NLP instructors. The reason for this is that nonverbal cues of communication are almost always unconscious, which makes the "unconscious" part seem unnecessary. From time to time, we use the term "unconscious nonverbal communication," however, just because we don't want you to get the impression that nonverbal communication is the only kind of unconscious communication there is.

Nonverbal communication is almost always unconscious because we don't think constantly about how much eye contact we make, how we present our posture, how much space we take up, how we use our voices, and so forth. People certainly do bring nonverbal communication into their conscious mind from time to time, but it is not what usually happens.

Most of the time, we don’t even think about any of these nonverbal cues while we use them — and this is what makes them a perfect window into the product of the subject. They are communicating what they are thinking or feeling on the inside, but they are not even aware that they are doing this.

Let’s go back to verbal unconscious communication, though. Verbal

communication intuitively seems a lot more conscious-level than nonverbal communication does. We can imagine ourselves showing signs with our body language that communicate messages without even realizing it, but we don’t think about the ways we unconsciously use language as much.

But we all use language unconsciously much of the time. This happens the most when we are talking to people who we know very well. We don't filter ourselves as much around these people, which brings out our unconscious verbal cues a lot more. You will also hear a person’s unconscious verbal language reveal itself when someone has been drinking, because they are also not filtering themselves so much when they are intoxicated.

However, you don’t have to be around people you are close with, and you don’t have to be drunk to show your unconscious verbal language. It is harder to notice when the subject is not in either of these situations, but with enough knowledge of what verbal cues to look for, you can still identify them.

The best example of unconscious verbal communication outside of these situations is filler words. In real life, no one speaks completely eloquently all the time. Depending on how self-aware you are, you will try harder to be more precise in your word choices, and you will try to use fewer filler words. However, no matter how hard we try, some of these filler words will always slip in there.

On a separate note, you would do well to avoid using so many filler words when you try to use NLP on someone. When your sentences are weighed down by a bunch of uhs, likes, and you knows, it severely lessens the impact of your speech. Great speakers will allow pauses to exist without filling them in with any filler words; this makes the people who listen to them pay more attention as well as take them more seriously. But there is much more to come in this book on using verbal communication effectively, so let's get back to the third foundation of emotional manipulation.

Filler words are unconscious. When you add likes and you knows to your

speech, you are not thinking consciously that you want those filler words to be in those specific places. Filler words naturally come through when we talk, making them unconscious.

We can even find meaning in someone's filler words. This is your first lesson on deciphering the messages the subject sends you with their unconscious verbal communication. When they use a lot of filler words, that can either mean they are comfortable around you, or it can mean they are trying hard to leave a good impression on you. It depends on what filler words they use.

If they keep saying "like," that is a solid indication that they are comfortable around you. It means they are not self-conscious about what they are saying, and so they are simply talking without thinking about their words too much. The same goes for "you know" — this filler phrase signifies to you that the subject is comfortable speaking with you in a casual tone. This is pertinent information as an NLP practitioner because the more comfortable they are with you, the easier it is to use one of our manipulation techniques on them.

The filler words "uh" and "um" have the opposite meaning of "like" and "you know." When the subject uses these filler words, it means they are not comfortable with you at all. They are being extremely careful about the words they are using. To bring in some neuroscience, you already learned, someone using "uh" and "um" is locked into their default mode. They are thinking about ideas, concepts. The subject is thinking about the concept of you in their mind, and they want you to think highly of them. Therefore, they are carefully selecting words from their mind to protect your idea of them.

When the subject uses "like" and "you know," it is the opposite. They are locked into their executive functioning network. They aren't thinking about how you feel about them because they aren't self aware in that moment. Remember, your default mode is used when you are self-aware, and your executive functioning is used when you are just aware of the task and not yourself. Someone saying "like" and "you know" is focused on the task of talking to you; they are un-self-consciously talking to you because they are comfortable with you.

This is only your introductory lesson on unconscious verbal communication. Remember the meanings of these filler words for later, and don't forget the importance of imitation with all forms of unconscious communication. Use the same filler words as the subject uses. On an unconscious level, they will get comfortable with you, and the lines between your mind and their mind will blur. This is how you get deep into their minds and change what is in there, whether you want to mind read them, mind control their thoughts, or manipulate their behavior.

Now it is time for you to start learning the ins and outs of unconscious nonverbal communication. There are multiple areas of nonverbal communication, but the main ones are the following: body language, eye contact, voice, and emotion.

As we said before, body language is almost always unconscious. There are times when everyone thinks about their nonverbal communication consciously, but almost all of the time, we just give off these cues without thinking about it at all. Since you are learning how to become a master emotional manipulator, you will have to bring these ideas out of your unconscious and into your conscious mind. This is the only way you can get better at interpreting the nonverbal cues people give you; this is the only way you can imitate the nonverbal cues the subject is giving you, so they let you deeper into their mind.

Later on, we get into the specific messages that the subject sends you with all different kinds of nonverbal cues. For this section, we just want you to see how it all comes together with verbal unconscious communication to be the third foundation of emotional manipulation. Thus, we will stick to just a few examples of nonverbal cues, what they mean, and how you respond with nonverbal cues of your own.

Body language is the broadest category within nonverbal communication. The list of cues we give people with our body language is almost endless. Thankfully, people tend to use just a few cues from a relatively short list, so we will focus on those in this book.

One cue you can identify right away is how much space the subject is taking up. Are their legs spread far apart? Are they leaning back in their seat in a way that seemed relaxed? Or are they sitting in a pretty formal way, with their hands on their lap and their legs relatively close together? These are all questions to ask yourself when evaluating the messages someone is sending you with their body language. The more time you spend asking yourself these questions, the greater your extra sense of nonverbal language will become so that you don't have to think about it explicitly as much.

We have said that the more comfortable the subject is with you, the deeper you go into their mind, making it easier to emotionally manipulate them. That means when the subject looks relaxed around you, you might think this means you are in the clear for using one of our techniques. But unfortunately, it is not so simple. This is one of the foundations of emotional manipulation that we will explore more deeply later on, but it needs to be briefly talked about right here.

Adaptability is integral to fruitful manipulation: you can carefully plan your method before you talk with your subject and get into their mind. Your state control and sensory acuity can be perfect, and you can read their unconscious communication like a book. But if you don't adapt to the social situation, none of these things will matter.

Take the example of someone using relaxed body language around you. This could mean you are deep into their mind and can use a technique on them, but it depends on the social context. Ask yourself: did the subject show relaxed body language throughout your entire interaction with them, or did they go from one kind of body language to another, more relaxed kind?

You have to understand the broader social context of your conversation with the subject in order to accurately interpret the messages they send you with their unconscious nonverbal communication. The main thing to pay attention to is the change in their body language. If they looked relaxed from the very start, this isn't an indication that you are close to them on an unconscious level. It means they felt comfortable around you from the very beginning, which can carry

different meanings depending on the social context.

For instance, if they are your boss at work, and they stay at the same level of relaxed body language throughout your interaction, this probably doesn't mean you are deep in their unconscious. It probably means they feel secure in their position above you at work and don't feel threatened at all. It doesn't have to be a bad thing every time this is the case, but our main point for this section is that you need to interpret the nonverbal messages people send based on their social context. Reading the messages of unconscious communication in a vacuum will not do you any good.

So far, we have only addressed how we interpret body language, but you will recall that imitating this body language is even more important. The key thing to remember is the with body language, just like all forms of unconscious communication, you don't always imitate what the subject does exactly. Whenever possible, you match their cues exactly. For example, you lean back in your seat just like they do; you spread your legs as far as they do; you put your hands on your lap if they are doing this. However, you don't imitate their exact cues every single time. Again, it depends on the context.

Let's say your boss just told you some bad news about the company. The company is projecting losses in the next quarter. After saying this, your boss is looking at you for a response. They are crossing their arms while they say this. Here, you can’t simply imitate them, because the subject is paying attention to you and listening to what you are going to say. This is not a good time to imitate them and cross your arms like they are.

Any time you are the focus of the interaction, you have to be extra cautious about when you imitate the subject’s unconscious communication.

You want them to unconsciously see that you are using the same cues they are so they get comfortable with you. But if they consciously become aware of it, they will notice explicitly, and they may even point it out. This never results in any terrible consequences for your relationship; almost everyone will simply make a

joke about it and move on. They won't get seriously freaked out about it or anything like that.

However, this is still bad news for you, because your nonverbal communication has moved from the area of their unconscious attention to the area of their conscious attention. As long as this is the case, you will have to wait a while for the subject to forget about this blunder.

All of this is to say: don't imitate the subject's body language when you are the center of attention. Imitate them as long as they are talking about something separate from both of you or about themselves — this is how you will get into their mind. From a wider perspective, you can look at this rule as not imitating the subject any time that specific imitation will draw too much attention to itself.

Sometimes, the attention will come to you for a different reason, like when your boss directly asks you a question in the previous example. But there are also times where the body language cue itself will be too strange to only enter the subject's unconscious, and it will enter their conscious attention instead. As usual, this can vary depending on the social context.

This gives us a transition to the next form that nonverbal communication takes: emotion. Emotion is one you have to be especially careful with because there are many situations where expressing the exact same emotion as the subject is not the right thing to do.

You can really use your common sense for this. Whenever possible, express the same emotion as the subject to fulfill the step of imitation that is necessary to infiltrate their mind and emotionally manipulate them. However, if they are grieving over the loss of a pet, you can't imitate the same level of intensity of sadness as the subject expresses. This would be a socially inappropriate thing to do that would only hinder you in your manipulation goals.

As far as interpreting the messages of emotion, this is where the area of emotional intelligence comes into play. You will have plenty to learn on that subject later on.

The main thing for you to focus on with interpreting emotion is letting this form of unconscious nonverbal communication inform what the ideas the subject is conveying to you. Your extra sense of insight will be helpful in this goal. Don't make the mistake of only hearing the flat content of the subject's words. Listen for the emotion underneath those words, too, because it can give them an entirely different meaning.

For example, your subject might tell you they started their new job. On the surface, this can sound like a tonally neutral thing to say. But if you listen to the emotion in their voice, you might get an entirely new layer of meaning from them. They might sound ever so slightly sad, and when you read this unconscious cue, it gives you a new piece of information that goes deeper than the simple fact they have a new job. Alternatively, they can sound excited or happy about the new job, which also tells us something that the words alone do not.

With that, we should focus on the next nonverbal form of communication: voice. This one is tightly connected to emotion. We can hear the subtlest of emotions from the tone of a person's voice. However, emotion is not the only meaning we can take from the subject's voice. There are a number of things we can pay attention to in a person’s voice to interpret what they are saying in a new way.

You might read what someone says on a transcript, and then hear it on tape, and it could make you understand what they are saying completely differently. We already established how this could be the case with emotion in the human voice, but now let’s talk about the breathiness of a voice.

Psychological research has shown that people who lie will have breathier voices. This is because they are nervous about being caught in a lie; being nervous makes us need more oxygen, so we breathe more. When we need to inhale and exhale more as we talk, it gives us a breathy voice.

You can also pay attention to the speed of someone’s voice. When people talk more slowly, it is because they are being thoughtful. They are using their default

mode network rather than just being aware of their current task in the executive functioning network.

As you know, people are always easier to manipulate when they are using the executive functioning network. They are not thinking deeply about things — they are living in the present moment. Because of this, they won't question it when you imitate their unconscious communication cues.

By the same token, they won't think it's odd when you use your voice in a similar way to them. In fewer words, a person who is speaking quickly is probably not thinking too deeply about what you are dong, and this gives you the perfect opportunity to make your way into their unconscious through imitation. On the other hand, someone who is speaking slowly is using a more reflective neural network, so it might not be the best time to imitate their unconscious cues.

Just like with every other form of nonverbal communication, you have to take the meaning of the subject's vocal cues with the social context. You have to take them with the information you have about the subject. Without taking these other factors into consideration, you won't be able to say anything about them from their voice alone.

For example, you have to take personality into account. Some personalities are prone to be fast talkers. If you know that someone always talks quickly, you shouldn't take their rapid speech to mean that their unconscious is currently more vulnerable to emotional manipulation. Likewise, someone who always talks slowly may not be thinking very deeply at the moment.

Besides personality, there is a social context to consider. If you happen to know the subject has something to be anxious about at the moment, they could be talking more quickly because of their anxiety. It doesn't necessarily mean they are using their executive functioning network. In fact, they could be deep in thought because of their anxiety.

There is more to cover on this nonverbal category that we will get to later on. For now, we have one more form of nonverbal communication to talk about: eye

contact.

Eye contact cues are like vocal cues in that personality comes into play when you want to interpret them. Some people make a lot of eye contact, and some people make very little. You should know which group your subject fits into from the very beginning; that way, you can interpret any changes in their level of eye contact.

What makes eye contact easier to interpret is that there is only one aspect of it to pay attention to: how much of it they are giving you. They can give you a lot of eye contact, very little, or somewhere in between. Their level of eye contact can tell you a few things about their current mental state.

Once you have already taken personality into consideration, think about the extremes of eye contact. Let's say your subject usually makes a medium amount of eye contact with you, but now they are making very little eye contact with you. Our brains know intuitively that this is a sign of a liar. They are so afraid that you will catch them in their lie that they think you will find out if you look them in the eye. The subject is afraid they will give it all away in their eyes.

When you are in this situation with them, think about something they recently told you. There is a very high likelihood that this was an embellishment or a lie, and this is why they are suddenly making so little eye contact.

The other extreme is a lot of eye contact. Now, recall that personality is of utmost importance to consider with eye contact. Some people always make a lot of eye contact, and even if it is more than is socially comfortable, this aspect of their personality means you shouldn't interpret anything from their heavy eye contact.

But next, we have to consider the subject who does not normally make heavy eye contact, and now they do. You should take this cue as meaning they are trying to dominate the situation. However, they are not as versed in the area of nonverbal communication as you already are, so they are misguided in their idea of what will make them dominant. They think that a sheer amount of eye contact

is enough to intimidate you and make you submissive to them.

When you encounter a subject doing this, you should take it to mean two key things: (1) they feel threatened by you, meaning they are not comfortable around you, and (2) they aren't naturally good communicators, which we know because they made excessive eye contact.

This isn't the easiest subject to have, because they will start off being on edge around you, making it harder to get into their unconscious. They are not the hardest subject to emotionally manipulate, however. You can put them at ease by demonstrating to them that you are not trying to threaten their social position (even if you are). The easiest way to do this is by showing that you are vulnerable using unconscious communication. You should have an idea of how to do this from what we have already discussed with the third foundation of emotional manipulation, but there is more to come on this question later.

When it comes to imitation, eye contact is the easiest one to do well. It is a very straightforward rule to follow: if they are making a low level of eye contact with you, make a similar level of eye contact. There are NLP classes that tell you to dominate the interaction from the outset by making more eye contact, but don't do this. It will only make you come across like the subject we mentioned earlier: someone who desperately craves social dominance, but tries too hard to attain it, ultimately making themselves look more submissive.

Instead, match the level of eye contact of the subject, whether they are making a lot, a little, or somewhere in between. However, this is only for the stage of NLP where you are getting into their mind, so keeping track of what stage you are in is important. If you can already tell from their other unconscious cues that they are comfortable with you, you may go ahead and push a bit more in the direction of making more eye contact. It is good to unconsciously demonstrate dominance by making good eye contact, but you have to do it at the right time.

You will find it helpful that we delved into some neuroscience in this section because this is the next foundation of emotional manipulation.

Let’s recap the foundations of emotional manipulation we have gone over so far. You have to (1: State Control) be able to control your emotions and instead express whatever emotion will help you in your goal of mind reading, mind control, or behavior manipulation. You must also (2: Sensory Acuity) learn how to let your senses guide you so you can obtain as much information about the subject as possible. And finally, this last section told you (3: Unconscious Communication) how to read unconscious cues of communication as well as imitate these cues to get deeper into the subject’s unconscious.

Just as important as these previous three foundations is the foundation of neuroscience. You must fully understand the fact that the mind is not an abstract, mystical concept, but a physical thing called the brain. This physical part of your body can be studied and understood. Even though we don’t know everything about the brain, we actually know a lot. It is just that most people keep the brain a mystery because they haven’t taken the time to learn about it.

After reading about the fourth foundation of emotional manipulation in the next section, you will no longer be in the dark about how the human brain is structured and how it functions. Getting familiar with the basics of neuroscience does not require you to be a brilliant scientist. We will get into some details later in the book, but in the section establishing neuroscience as our fourth foundation, you will learn only the most important facts about the science of the brain, and how they relate to our NLP goals.

The Fourth Foundation: Neuroscience

NLP is the lifeblood of everything we study in emotional manipulation, and that first letter stands for "neuro," meaning brain. There is a good chance that you groan at the idea of studying the science behind how the brain works. It is understandable if you do this; for some of us, science was not exactly our favorite subject. But we challenge you to give the fourth foundation a chance because it will elegantly tie everything we teach you together. The

more connections you make between all the concepts we go over, the better you will remember them, and the easier they will come to you when you need to use these concepts in the moment. Learning basic neuroscience will help you the most in learning everything else we do in our manipulation techniques.

Recall what we told you from the very beginning of the book: the principle idea behind NLP is manipulating a person by speaking to their unconscious mind in its own language.

In order to speak in the language of the unconscious mind, we have to know what kind of language it is. Understanding the basic structure of the brain will be key in getting there, and so will understanding the way the brain develops on a cellular level. This is what neuroscience does for us in emotional manipulation.

As neuroscientists study the human brain, they change their understanding of it based on what they discover. Not long ago, scientists understood the brain on a more macro level by looking at different “brain parts” and looking at what they did.

Before then, when the age of naturalism came about, scientists wanted to know how to answer questions about the brain before they had the technology to examine it directly the way we do now. Even though they couldn’t look at the brain on a microscopic level, they still had ideas about what different parts of the brain did.

In these times, the idea of phrenology got into the public imagination. Phrenology was the idea that different areas of the brain corresponded to completely different functions. They circled a segment of the brain that they believed was responsible for learning language; they circled another segment they believed was responsible for fine motor skills; and so on.

This was definitely an overly simplistic way of understanding the brain, but back then, we didn’t have anything better to go off of. It also made some intuitive sense that certain parts of the brain were responsible for different tasks. Before even the time of phrenology, people referred to different areas of their brains as

“faculties” with different jobs. Those who follow the science may know more about the brain today, but from our subjective experience as humans, the idea that different areas of the brain match with different functions still seem to make sense.

Knowing what we know now, we know that the old idea that different parts of the brain did different jobs is overly simplistic, but not completely wrong. We do know that there are different parts of the brain that do jobs entirely different from what any other brain part does, but these brain parts always do multiple different jobs, and they interact with the rest of the brain in many different ways. There is no part of the brain that does just one job.

Take one brain part as an example: the amygdala. The amygdala might be the most well-known brain part, although most people still don’t know what it is. Popular books about mental health tend to say that the amygdala is responsible for your fight-or-flight response.

While this is true, the amygdala does much more than that. It isn’t only responsible for your feelings of fear and anxiety, but it also has the role of keeping control of your aggression, as well as the role of retaining memories with emotional resonances.

As you are able to learn, the brain is a highly-connected thing. That’s why the amygdala has several different responsibilities. That’s why there is no such thing as a brain part with just one job.

Before our current understanding of the brain, but after phrenology had fallen out of favor, the main way scientists thought about the brain was through brain parts. It wasn’t quite phrenology, because they had reasons for believing different parts of the brain did the jobs they said they did. But it was still similar to phrenology in that it only saw the brain as a collection of different brain parts that performed different jobs. This way of seeing the brain is now known as functionalism, and it came after phrenology.

At least now, the claims made about different brain parts were based on

scientific evidence, but it was still similar to phrenology in the idea that these brain parts performed single, rigid tasks, and this was it. Functionalism still does not bring in the interconnectedness of the brain.

Fast forward to the modern day, and we finally have a scientific paradigm for looking at the brain that does take this interconnectedness into account. You might already know what it is known as since we briefly went over it in the sensory acuity section: our current understanding of the brain is based on *neural networks.*

But we have to back up for a short while. Before you can be ready to learn about neural networks, you have to learn about the brain on a microscopic level.

As we told you before, your brain cells are called neurons. On their own, your neurons actually do not do much for your brain. What makes neurons useful is the links from neuron to neuron. The links themselves are called synapses, or synaptic connections.

Any time you pick up a new skill, hear a new fact, or form a new memory, new synaptic connections form between your neurons. This is called *post-synaptic firing*. But there is only so much space for your connections to go, so there is a give and take to making synaptic connections. Your neurons have to let go of connections you have not used in a while to make room for these new connections. When you let go of these unused synapses, this is called *post-synaptic pruning*.

This may be at the cellular level, but learning about these links between our brain cells has had gigantic implications in understanding the human brain. The most important thing we are learning from this is just how malleable the human brain is. Since the structure of our brains changes every time we form a new memory — every time we form or reinforce connections between our neurons — that means every little thing we do alters our brain. The connections in your brain rearrange countless times every day, effortlessly.

The word for this malleability of our brains is called neuroplasticity. (Don't

worry — from here on out, there is no more new scientific vocabulary, so pat yourself on the back for getting this far.) Neuroplasticity allows us to learn new languages, pick up dance moves, remember new faces, and more. It is a truly amazing attribute of the brain that is now part of the public imagination because of neuroscience's advances. If we didn't have the technology to see these trillions of connections between our neurons, we wouldn't know about neuroplasticity.

Finally, you are ready to get back to our current *neural networks* understanding of the human brain. You see, we know now that our brains are not as simple as a cluster of brain parts that perform separate functions. Certainly, we have separate parts of the brain that do different tasks, but the truth of the brain goes much deeper than that.

More important than your brain parts are the neural networks in your brain. They are fascinating things to study because when you go to the cellular level, we can see that neural networks are merely webs of connected neurons over innumerable synapses. However, these microscopic connections cover more area than any one brain part. Not only that, but these neural networks are what glue all of our brain parts together, which explains why no brain part does just one or two jobs. The entire brain is a series of neural networks communicating with one another through synapses.

We have already talked about the two most important neural networks in our section about the foundation of sensory acuity: imagination. Imagination is possible because of your default mode network. Your ability to focus on one task and stay aware of it throughout is thanks to the executive functioning network.

After such a short period of time, you now have a very solid understanding of the current scientific paradigm of the human brain. This scientific paradigm will come up throughout the book, but we explore it in more detail in later chapters.

There are just three more foundations left, and the next one is closely related to neuroscience: psychology. Psychology is what ties the natural science of the brain to the human science of behavior — you will need both to be a master

manipulator. There is no reason to delay: read on and learn how psychology ties into NLP and emotional manipulation.

The Fifth Foundation: Dark Psychology

Every field of psychology is useful for a manipulator: social psychology, cognitive psychology, personality psychology, developmental psychology — the list goes on. But if you truly want to succeed in becoming a master manipulator, there is one branch of psychology that you don't want to ignore. It is called dark psychology.

Dark psychology encompasses every field of psychology, but it includes the research and experiments that are not usually talked about because they deal with sensitive topics. You may even feel uncertain about getting into this field yourself so you can become an expert in emotional manipulation. But if you expect to gain the ability to sway people in your favor no matter the situation and no matter how difficult the subject is, studying dark psychology is a necessary journey for you to take.

It involves the secrets of the human mind that we aren't supposed to know. It involves the truths about humanity that are too uncomfortable to face. It is always your choice whether you dive into this territory or not. Just know that if you decide to look away from this knowledge instead of looking straight into it, it is going to be impossible for you to reach your full potential in NLP.

This forbidden branch of psychology tells us of concepts in social psychology that are usually ignored because people don't want to accept them. In mainstream psychology, there are certain elements that are still useful to us as manipulators. As one example, the phenomenon of social comparison can help us figure out someone's motivations. Social comparison is the human tendency to look at the things other people have and compare them to what we have. If we feel like we have less than someone else, it lowers our self-esteem. This motivates us to do whatever we need to do to get ahead.

Mainstream psychology may tell us that part of social comparison, but it doesn’t acknowledge the next. Studies show that not only do we feel worse about ourselves when we see someone who has more because of social comparison — we also get higher self-esteem when we see people who have less than us.

This is just one example of a truth in psychology we confront in dark psychology but don't in mainstream psychology. There is a long list of findings from dark psychology that don’t seem to make it into most psychology publications for the simple reason that they make people feel uneasy. But as you know, you won’t be able to be the best emotional manipulator you can be if you ignore these truths, so your best course is to continue forward and learn more.

Cognitive psychology also has its fair share of experiments in dark psychology. One of these studied a child who was put into a sensory deprivation chamber for days. She got food and water, but the walls were blank, and there was not even any color. She had nothing in that room to stimulate her senses.

As a result of having no sensory stimulation, the girl ended up having vivid hallucinations. This study teaches us that the human mind does not just passively receive information through our senses — we bring in old memories from our neural networks to lessen the load of our senses. Even though this experiment was done over fifty years ago, there are still people who think that hallucinations can only result from a mental disorder like schizophrenia. But this girl was not diagnosed with schizophrenia, so we know this was not the case here. She did not go through any fundamental changes to her brain; it was simply that she had no sensory experience to go from, so her brain started to create something of its own. That means we don’t experience the world neutrally or without bias from our own experience.

As a manipulator, you can apply this experiment in dark psychology to the way your subject perceives the world. It will help you remember that they don’t experience the world the exact same way you do. You will have to use your extra sense of empathy to see the world from their eyes. When you do this, you will be better equipped for manipulating them.

We will save the rest of your lessons in psychology for later on in the book. The studies themselves can be applied to a variety of situations in emotional manipulation. Try to think of all of these studies from the perspective of a neuroscientist. Think about how the structure of the brain changes in response to a stimulus.

Psychology is merely the subjective side of neuroscience. We know this because psychology is the study of human behavior and the mind, and neuroscience tells us that the mind is just the brain, and human behavior is a result of brain activity. If you go into a conversation with your subject with this objective viewpoint, it will tremendously help you in your NLP attempt.

The Sixth Foundation: Imitation

To understand where imitation fits into the process of emotional manipulation, we have to put all the foundations we have covered so far.

Imitation is the second-to-last foundation of emotional manipulation. The next one is framing and adaptability. While the sixth foundation is the one you use to ease your way into the subject's unconscious mind, the seventh foundation is how you mind control them or manipulate their behavior once you are in there.

The first foundation was state control. This is the foundation in which we NLP practitioners protect ourselves from being emotionally manipulated by the subject by taking complete control over our emotions. We also put ourselves on the offensive with state control, using the same concepts we use to control our own emotional states in order to control theirs.

The second foundation was sensory acuity. Sensory acuity is necessary to ensure we absorb as much information about the subject as possible, because the more information we get from them, the easier it is to toy with their emotions. Having strong sensory acuity makes sure we aren't only getting information the subject tells us directly: this information can be useful too, but even more useful is the

information they tell us without even realizing it.

The third foundation was unconscious communication. There are two important tasks we achieve with a strong sense of unconscious communication: firstly, we gain the ability to naturally perceive the cues of unconscious communication our subject gives us and know what they mean. At first, we must actively pay attention to these cues and think through the specific meanings these cues have. However, through extensive training of your sensory acuity, the meanings behind these cues are transmitted to you naturally to your conscious mind.

The second part of unconscious communication is imitation — the foundation of emotional manipulation that is the focus of this section. When you know the cues used in unconscious communication, you can see what cues the subject is using and use them yourself. Through imitation, you make their unconscious mind lose sight of the boundary between your mind and theirs. They become more comfortable with you, making it now possible to mind control or manipulate them.

The fourth foundation was neuroscience. On the most objective, physical level, neuroscience is what makes the things we do in NLP possible. That’s why it is so important for you to know at least the basics of neuroscience.

The fifth foundation is the other side of the neuroscience coin: psychology. It shouldn’t take a lot of convincing to make you believe that understanding human behavior is helpful in emotional manipulation. The more psychology seems natural to you, the more emotional manipulation will seem natural to you.

And now, we have researched the sixth foundation of emotional manipulation: imitation. As we told you before, imitation is the aspect of emotional manipulation in which you use the same unconscious cues of communication the subject does. In doing so, they see you as being more like them and feel closer to you, more comfortable with you. You won’t have the ability to implant new beliefs into their mind or manipulate their behavior until you have sufficiently completed the step of imitation.

Like all of these foundations, imitation is necessary for successful NLP. Whether you are seducing someone, trying to get into their mind through words, or trying to manipulate a difficult subject, you will have to use a lot of imitation to do so.

Where a lot of NLP fledglings go wrong is thinking they only need to copy the body language of the subject. This is only part of what you need to do.

Think of it like this. You don't only want to make the subject see you as similar to them in a physical sense. You want them to see you as like them mentally — you want their mind to think yours is like them. Once you accomplish this through imitation, you have done the hardest part of emotional manipulation.

The physical part of imitation is making a similar level of eye contact, mirroring their emotional expression back at them, doing similar things to what they do with their voice, and displaying similar body language to your subject.

The non-physical part of imitation starts with your words. We already went over this with the verbal side of unconscious communication. This means using the same words for things that your subject does. It means using the same speaking style they use — for example, talking in large bursts of words, or talking in short sentences.

But imitating non-physical parts of your subject isn't limited to unconscious verbal communication. Use the people around you to learn more about this person, or simply use your sensory acuity to let the subject teach you about them themselves. What kinds of beliefs do they have? What are their values? It doesn't have to be this deep, either. What kinds of foods do they usually eat? How do they present themselves in how they dress? What artists do they listen to?

Use your sense of empathy to see the world from their point of view. What does this teach you, and how can you change your behavior and habits, so they are more in line with what the subject's goals are?

Don't follow them blindly, but listen to your gut feelings, too. What do your

instincts tell you about the subject? What ways can you present yourself so that they see you as like them?

Notice how in all of these examples, imitation is not as straightforward as simply copying the subject's behavior. The term "imitation" means something different in NLP than it does in other contexts.

Our use of this term is only because of a lack of a better word. Some of the time, you will do exactly as you see the subject do. But other times, you aren't only imitating the things you can see. You are imitating behavior that is beneficial to imitate given the information you have about them, and given the social context you are in.

In other words, imitation doesn't only mean doing exactly what the subject does. It also means imitating their idea of what is good or desired. You learn this information using your sensory acuity.

Imitation is going to come up throughout the rest of the book, so be sure to keep these fundamentals in mind as it is used. Now it is finally time to learn the last foundation of emotional manipulation: framing and adaptability.

The Seventh Foundation: Framing and Adaptability

The seventh foundation of emotional manipulation is where you finally take advantage of the position you have put your subject in.

Through state control, you prevented them from taking control of the unconscious realm and took control of this by controlling their emotions. With your sensory acuity, you gathered all the intelligence about the subject that you could. You will find that sensory acuity is particularly important in adaptability because your senses tell you when you need to change your own behavior based on your subjects. Without good sensory acuity, you may not even notice when it is necessary to adapt to a new situation.

Unconscious communication is more important for the step that comes before framing and adaptability: imitation. You imitate their unconscious cues of communication to get into your unconscious. By the time you are into the seventh foundation of emotional manipulation, unconscious communication should no longer be your biggest focus. It has already done its job.

The fourth and fifth foundations, neuroscience and psychology, are both pertinent to the seventh foundation because they inform you about how to adapt to the situation. Without a strong base of understanding for these subjects, you won't have the social acumen to adapt properly to what your subject is doing.

Finally, the sixth foundation of imitation is what makes framing and adaptability possible. Through imitation, we put the subject at ease and cause them to incorporate us into their psyche. That brings us to the last foundation of emotional manipulation.

Before explaining the two sides to the seventh foundation, we must make something clear. This is the foundation where you use one of the manipulation techniques found in this book, as NLP teaches us to use them.

Now, bear in mind that all these other foundations exist for a reason. You can't expect to succeed in emotional manipulation by only using these techniques without a strong theoretical grasp of neurolinguistic programming. You can try to use the techniques, but you won't be able to find much success in them.

All of these foundations must be in place for your manipulation to be effective. With that said, let's make sure we understand the two sides to the seventh foundation — that is, the two sides to correctly using one of the manipulation techniques in this book.

The first of the two sides is framing. Framing is our goal when using a manipulation technique, but it is also an art form. When we say it is your goal, we mean that when you create a frame that works, you make the subject believe in the truth as you proclaim it to be.

But you need to be familiar with the subtlety of this proclamation. You can't make it seem as though you are making a bold proclamation, and that you just want them to agree with you. In fact, this is a surefire way to turn them off of the idea you want them to espouse.

Instead, you need to make it believable that you want the subject to have to seem like a natural truth. This is the art of framing. The very moment you are explicitly trying to make the subject believe what you want them to believe, your framing has already failed.

Remember: NLP is not about debate. It is not about conversation. NLP depends on your ability to portray the outside world as if you see it objectively as if it can be no other way as if it is impossible for anything other than what you are saying proclaiming to be true.

This is why it is called framing. You aren't interested in convincing them of what *you* believe. You are interested in making them believe that the world objectively exists as you want them to see it. There is an important distinction. Framing requires you to paint a picture of the world that seems objective and unbiased. When you frame things the right way, you make the subject believe that the way you proclaim things to be is the absolute truth and that it is nonsense for anything else to be true. "Convincing" implies the subject knows there are alternative views from the one you want them to believe, and with effective framing, they stop seeing these alternative views as a possibility.

Mind control and behavior manipulation are not truly any different as far as the foundations of emotional manipulation go. For both, you want to change the subject's ideas about the world in a way that benefits you. When you mind control them, you cause them to have the beliefs you want them to have. When you manipulate someone's behavior, you are still framing the truth in a way that leads the subject to espouse certain beliefs, but these beliefs are ones that give the subject incentive to take on the behaviors you want them to take on.

The second side of this seventh foundation is adaptability. Adaptability is what

makes the difference between an emotional manipulator who can only influence easy subjects and one who can influence anyone they like. That's because you may have a perfect plan of action for changing someone's unconscious, but things don't always go as planned.

You may misunderstand something about the subject that leads you to approach the technique the wrong way. You may suddenly become aware of an emotion the subject is going through that completely changes their mental state. Whatever the case, it is actually quite rare for the way you see things at first to be the full picture of the subject's mind. Because of this, your adaptability is vital to emotionally manipulating them.

While the framing part of the seventh foundation is the theoretical side of the techniques contained in this book, adaptability is where all the foundations we have gone over, come into play.

You need proper state control because when the subject starts expressing an emotion you didn't see coming, you can't let them trap you into feeling it with them. That would make you lose control of the situation.

You need solid sensory acuity because this will clue you in on whether something is about to change in the subject's attitudes. The slightest change in their voice or their facial expression can tell you if the dynamics of your interaction with them are about to change. Without solid sensory acuity, you won't be able to do well in the adaptability portion of the seventh foundation.

The third foundation comes in handy for adaptability in how it works in tandem with sensory acuity. You may be able to accurately take in the basic information of what unconscious cues of communication the subject is giving you, but this doesn't necessarily mean you are interpreting them correctly. As we have said, the more you learn about the specific meanings of the cues, the less you will need the third foundation to do it consciously. But there is a long road for you to take before you reach that point.

The fourth foundation of neuroscience is one that should give you hope in

adaptability. It should give you hope because you are aware of neuroplasticity. When you know that the brain is constantly changing, it changes your perspective on NLP and emotional manipulation.

Someone might seem like they are not susceptible to NLP at all in the beginning. But the more you adapt to the unconscious signals they are giving you, the more and more susceptible they will become. They are only human, after all, and the more you move them ever so slightly towards being your ally, the closer you are to using mind control or manipulation on them.

Psychology is by far the most important thing for you to learn to be adaptable as a manipulator. There are simply some concepts that will keep you from influencing some people unless you know them. Thankfully, this book is filled with psychological concepts from beginning to end.

Even when we aren't explicitly talking about psychology itself, psychology forms the underpinnings of neurolinguistic programming. It is what allows us to apply neuroscience to our real lives, which is exactly what we want to do in emotional manipulation.

Essentially, the seven foundations take up so much of our time because adaptability is the most important thing you can learn as an NLP manipulator — and unless you understand all seven foundations like the back of your hand, you can't adapt to changes in the social situation.

You might not believe it, but by this point in the book, you are at least at an intermediate level in emotional manipulation. By knowing much more than almost anyone knows about NLP, you can take advantage of these forbidden truths about human behavior and exploit them to make people do what you want them to do.

These foundations will naturally come up throughout the rest of the book, but since you already know how they fit together and what they all mean individually, this should make the rest of the book a breeze to you. Think back to the fourth foundation: neuroscience. The more connections you make between

the ideas within these pages, the easier you will be able to learn all of it. The seven foundations of emotional manipulation tie the whole book together. With them solidly in your memory, the rest of our lessons should be relatively easy for you, even though there is still plenty fo you to learn.

Our next chapter will go deeper into mind control. Mind control is specifically the aspect of emotional manipulation in which we plant a new belief in the subject’s mind. This involves controlling the subject’s emotional state, employing a few psychology concepts, something called social framing, and more. Keep reading to get even deeper into the field of emotional manipulation.

USING NLP TO MANIPULATE THE MIND

THERE ARE many methods you can use to manipulate someone's mind. You can manipulate minds with emotions, social conditioning, or classical conditioning. This chapter will go through all of these options and tell you which ones best fit your particular situation.

The most likely case is that you will use different techniques depending on what you are trying to do. Even if you find yourself only using one or two most of the time, there is a lot you can learn from each of them, so at least give them a try.

The Emotional Angle of Mind Control

When going through the first foundation of emotional manipulation, we mentioned that state control is not only your ability to control your own emotions but someone else's. This is where you exploit the subject's emotions to change their mental state.

Everything in NLP is much easier when you have control over someone's emotions. Y0u can think of emotions like music: emotions activate in every part of the brain. No matter who you are trying to manipulate, being able to evoke their emotions is going to help you. It puts you in control of their mind when you can make them feel an emotion at your will.

Recall our exploration of the topic of emotion. Emotions are not a "reaction" in

an “emotional center” of your brain, despite what a lot of people believe. Emotions are what it feels like subjectively when we mentally resist something that is happening that we cannot control. We already established this, but now that you have a basis on the latest neurological research, you are ready to go deeper into what we mean by this.

The default mode network of your brain is responsible for everything you think about that doesn’t have to do with the information you are currently taking in with your senses. Instead, it is where you think about the information you have stored in your memories: it is where you think about what has happened in your life, what will happen, and who you are.

The next step in your journey as an emotional manipulator is realizing that this is the heart of your emotions. Look at it in terms of what neural network you use when things are in your control, and when they are not.

When you are in control, you resist something undesired in your executive functioning network. Let’s say you are dealing with a client at work who is less than friendly. If you have developed strong social skills over the course of your life, you know that you can take care of this person in a way that will stop them from being so unpleasant. You will use the executive functioning network because you don’t have to think deeply about what you will do to help them. You don’t have to get creative with your default network — you already know what you have to do, so it will come naturally to you in your executive functioning network.

What if you aren’t as socially skilled, though? You don’t have to be born a certain way to be less skilled in social settings — by nature, social rules are something that is learned. They are not something that we are born knowing. However, if we don’t know the social rules, and we don’t know how to deal with unpleasant people naturally, we don’t use our executive functioning mode. This is because we have to think a little deeper. We have to think a little deeper when we don’t automatically know what the right thing to do is.

If you feel as though you have no control over the situation with this unpleasant client, you will get mad because you are resisting the things you can't control in your default mode network. This is in stark contrast to when we know how to control the situation, and we handle it in the executive functioning network.

In the default mode network, we start experiencing the feeling of anger or frustration because we are imagining changing things by force — naturally. But if you don't have the social talents to do this, we still strongly desire to have control over it that we don't have in real life. Executive functioning is where we think through things we have control over because we can see ourselves handling them in our awareness.

The default mode is where we imagine taking care of it — it is where we so strongly desire to change what we feel is unavoidable. But the mental tension comes in because we can also see in our executive functioning network that we aren't actually fixing the social situation. This tension between what we are aware of through our executive functioning network and what we desire in our default mode network is the source of emotion at the neurological level.

But so far, we have only applied this to controlling your own state. You also have to apply state control to manipulate the subject's emotions. The thing that makes it easier is that it uses the same principles you already know. Simply use your extra sense of empathy to see state control from the subject's perspective, and you are on a good start to manipulating their emotions.

The general procedure is to give the subject the sense that there is something they want to control, but can't. As you know, this is the instigator of every emotion. If they believe they are not in control of something, the same thing that happens to you when you feel negative emotions will happen to them.

Their default mode network will resist the idea by imagining themselves changing the uncontrollable, while their executive functioning network is cognizant of the fact that they cannot change it. This causes a tension that will result in their feeling a negative emotion.

The practice of changing their emotion is the easy part, but where things get more complicated is knowing how to use this in practice for NLP. How does state controlling the subject help you in your goals of emotional manipulation?

The answer is actually quite simple. Mainly, controlling the subject's emotion is useful because it helps us with framing. You see, when they believe there is something that they can't control, and they feel strong negative emotions; as a result, it makes them want to change this situation. They are only imagining changing it in their default mode network, but they know that it isn't actually changing.

Your job as an NLP manipulator is to get them to first experience this frustration, and then guide them on a path to ridding themselves of that emotion.

After all, the end goal of changing their emotions is not usually just to get them to feel bad. Maybe this is your ultimate goal, and if so, you don't really need to study further. But chances are, you don't only want the subject to feel bad. You want them to have a new incentive to change their belief or behavior.

If they see this uncontrollable situation because of your framing of the truth, but then you show them how they can actually change it — by changing their beliefs or behavior — this is how you manipulate their behavior.

There are NLP instructors out there who neglect the aspect of emotion in neurolinguistic programming, and that is a big mistake. It is highly unwise to ignore the things that emotional manipulation can do for us in NLP. By choosing not to tamper with the subject's emotions, you are choosing not to use arguably the best tool in your NLP toolkit.

We will use an example to illustrate this. Let's say the belief you want the subject to adopt is that consuming meat is not immoral. This belief may not fit with what you would actually want your subject to believe, but the belief itself doesn't matter too much. You can insert any belief here, and it will still work.

You already know that your first step to activating your subject's emotions is to

frame things to make them think there is something they can't control. In this example, the subject starts out thinking that we should not eat meat — they are vegetarian.

You have to use your creative mind here, because you have to figure out a frame that fits these stipulations: (1) the subject will be frustrated there is nothing they can change about it with their current beliefs and behavior, and (2) the subject will realize that adopting your desired belief or behavior is the answer to changing the outcome — however, continuing on their current course of behavior or keeping their present beliefs is not an option.

In the case of the vegetarian, practice using your creative mind to come up with a frame that fulfills these two stipulations. Continue reading after you have spent some time on this.

To be fair, this one is very tricky without doing some research. Some scenarios can be pretty difficult in NLP, however, so you have to be prepared to do this. Oftentimes, it isn't enough to only know information about the subject. You also have to immerse yourself in the mental world they live in by doing research on the things they are interested in — on the things they care about.

For this scenario, you have to figure out something that the vegetarian can't control. Now, as long as your answer fulfills both of the stipulations, you got it right.

It probably doesn't look exactly like ours. But here is one possible frame: there is a special kind of fat called omega-3 fatty acids, and they are only present in meat. You can get them from supplements, but the research actually shows that you don't get nearly enough health benefits from getting omega-3 fats from supplements. You might also want to sprinkle in all the specific things omega-3's do for your body to make sure they know how important they are. That means their only option for getting enough of it is choosing to change their diet to eat some meat.

This fulfills the first requirement of being something they can't control with their

current behavior of eating no meat. It also fulfills the second requirement of being something they can change if they adopt the new behavior you want them to have (eating meat).

It is only one example, but it is a perfect example of using emotion to mind control your subject. They will be frustrated and even mad at you for pointing out the truth as you frame it, but since it is a scientific fact, they won't be able to get mad at you personally — as long as you bring this up in a courteous and dispassionate manner, that is.

Evoking emotions in your subject is actually easy — you just have to be sure you are doing it in a controlled, useful way. It isn't useful to you if you just make them feel depressed or mad in a way that doesn't actually help you manipulate their behavior or beliefs. Remember: use your creative mind to build a frame that (1) shows them there is something they can't control as they are now (2) but can be controlled if they adopt the belief or behavior you want them to adopt.

The Social Angle of Mind Control

Social framing is quite similar to controlling the emotional state of your subject. This is because the seventh foundation of framing and adaptability always follows the same basic pattern. But before you are ready to learn how to do social framing correctly, you need a brief lesson on dark psychology to understand the great impact of the social world on the human mind.

This was an experiment done back in the 1930s. These days, there is an organization called the American Psychological Association that controls the kinds of studies social scientists can do. Their main concern is making sure psychologists follow ethical guidelines. These are guidelines such as not lying to study participants for a long length of time, especially not without debriefing them after the fact. They're also more obvious ones, like not allowing them to hurt participants physically or traumatize them.

But the APA is a pretty new organization, and they didn't arise immediately after the study of human behavior (psychology) started to be taken seriously. Nowadays, the rules on what psychologists can ethically put their study participants through are quite strict. Many of the studies in dark psychology are, therefore, from an era where these guidelines were not in place when psychologists pretty much did whatever they could get away with.

This 1930s study followed two groups of orphans, many of whom had speech disorders. One group of the orphans went to loving, supporting families. The other group, for the purposes of the experiment, went to families who were intentionally negative and abusive. The ethical concerns are obvious here, but while this was an awful thing to put children through, we can still learn from the experiment.

The results teach us much about social psychology. The children who were put in supporting environments often saw fewer issues in their speech disorders, while the group that had the abusive environment had even worse speech disorder issues than the other group.

This may seem obvious. You may think, of course, the kids in the abusive environment had more speech issues. But if this is how you view it, you may have to see it from a different point of view. It is common for people to see the results of psychology and think it seems like just common sense.

But you have to remember that there is a difference between something seeming like common sense and it being tested scientifically and proven. This study took the idea that you might have assumed, and it proved it. There are a great number of things that people assume about psychology that are not true, so it is useful to look at specific studies like this one and see what is actually proved in experiments.

You also have to think about it in terms of scope. Sure, you might expect that the children in the abusive environment didn't improve. But it went even further than that: they got worse than they were before. This shows the importance of

social environments for human beings.

The impact of a negative social environment for children was so great that these orphans got even worse with their speech disorders. From a neuroscience perspective, you could also say that the kids' brains changed significantly because of the negative social environment.

Now, we are not telling you to be as negative towards your subject as these orphans' parents were. Even beyond the ethical concerns, this isn't going to be helpful for your emotional manipulation. Remember, the emotional control part of manipulation is not just to make them feel bad — it is a means to the end of mind control or behavior manipulation.

The basic idea behind social framing is making the subject believe that the social environment is different than it is. You want the subject to believe that the social group they want to be part of is doing a certain behavior or adopting a certain belief. Our social standing is so important to us as humans that we will almost do anything to make it better.

Of course, you have to be strategic about how you do your social framing. You need to make a claim about this social group's behaviors and beliefs that the subject will believe, and something they won't feel the need to fact-check on. If they are suspicious enough of your claim that they will ask a lot of questions, you will have to change the claim you are going to make.

Here is an example. You have the opportunity to tell the subject that this social group has your desired behavior at an event both of you go to. One of the most important things for you to do is make sure you bring up this social frame in passing — if you make it too obvious that you really want them to buy this, they are going to be suspicious.

Start out having a normal, casual conversation with them. The first few topics you talk about should have nothing to do with the social frame you give them. This will assuage any potential suspicion they will have. But after you have the casual talk out of the way, you can bring up a topic that is somewhat related to

your social frame. Maybe it relates to the social group the frame is about. This would be the easiest way to do it.

Once this is done, you can casually bring up the social frame as if it naturally came into the conversation. Say it in a monotone voice that won't be questioned, as if you don't care about what they think about it at all. Then let the conversation move on. If you bring it up with some other casual subjects and act like it doesn't matter to you, this will give your social frame a lot of credibilities.

The way you succeed with social framing has all to do with the state control. If you act as it matters to you at all, the social frame will fail. The only way to make sure the subject doesn't question it is with an unwavering placid attitude. You don't have to treat it like the end of the world if the subject questions the social frame, as long as they don't accuse you of lying (which shouldn't happen in the first place — you really need to make sure you make a claim about this social group that is believable). If they say something like, "I heard something else," then just move on and say you must have been mistaken. They won't think anything of it.

This is definitely not what you want to happen, but this is adaptability coming into play in emotional manipulation yet again. How you succeed in your NLP is by playing by ear, adapting to new information as you get it, and not getting so bent out of shape when things don't go as planned. This may be the most important thing for you to learn from this chapter: things will go wrong in your emotional manipulation. They will not go as planned. You still need to plan, so you know what you are going to do, but you should also plan for your plan not to work exactly as you imagine it. This will keep your state control in check.

Mind Controlling with Mirror Neurons

The reason you have to learn about neuroscience in this book is to be able to understand what we mean when we go through concepts like mirror neurons. Despite the great implications of this special kind of neuron, the

population at large still doesn’t know anything about them. You will be complete in your lessons on NLP mind control after you have a strong understanding of what mirror neurons are and how you can use them.

We told you that you should not always imitate the subject’s unconscious cues of communication exactly. What you do instead is imitate them whenever you can, but take in information with sensory acuity as you interact with them, and let this tell you whether you should imitate them exactly or not.

You are the only person who can know if you should imitate them. This book can give you the manipulation techniques, and we can tell you the seven foundations of emotional manipulation in detail so that you have both practical and theoretical ideas to decide how you should adapt to your subject.

But we can’t be there when you run into these particular situations — it is ultimately on you to make a judgment call. That’s why you will find yourself relying on the seven foundations heavily to improve your adaptability. They apply to the specific situations you find yourself in because they fit into the general pattern of manipulation.

This aspect of mind control is where the fourth foundation of emotional manipulation comes in. The easiest way to explain mirror neurons is this: when you read a book in which a character eats an orange, and when you eat an orange, your mirror neurons fire in both situations. In other words, mirror neurons are the neurological basis of empathy.

The best emotional manipulators are masters of mirror neurons. You just have to understand that your mirror neurons are constantly firing when you are interfacing with someone. When you tell a story to your subject, you are making tons of mirror neurons fire in their brains. They have no choice but to fire these mirror neurons because this is simply what they do.

Mirror neurons were found by scientists in the brains of chimps, and then they were scanned and found in human beings. Another way to see mirror neurons is that reading about something will fire the same mirror neurons that would fire if

you did that same thing. As you might expect, these mirror neurons exist in the default mode network.

The fact that mirror neurons exist should tell you one thing: when possible, tell stories to your subject. Of course, you have to make sure it is natural. You don’t want to tell people stories they don’t want to hear. But if you have the opportunity, take it, because the more you get their mirror neurons to fire, the deeper you will be in the depths of their unconscious.

Be sure to apply these lessons of mind control to the next chapter, in which we discuss how these techniques apply to love and relationships.

USING NLP FOR LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

WHETHER WE WANT to admit it or not, a romantic engagement between two people always involves emotional manipulation. By definition, emotional manipulation is simply changing someone else's emotions.

Once you step back and look at it more objectively, you realize it is only natural to want to learn how to do this more effectively. When we create a proper boundary of rules and limits and use them for loving, constructive purposes. Feelings of love are natural, wonderful feelings, but if your needs are not met, and expectations aren't met, they quickly become more of a new problem in our lives than anything positive.

In this chapter, we challenge you to think differently about what emotional manipulation really means by providing you with a powerful way to open up the subject's mind.

Capturing the Subject's Imagination

Recall the foundations of emotional manipulation in the first chapter. In the second foundation, we learn how to make our senses better at doing their jobs. This is necessary to make sure you have what it takes to use NLP on the people you have existing relationships with. The last extra sense we went over was the sense of imagination.

We said that the sense of imagination has two important parts: activating your own imagination to set the goal you have for your subject and helping your subject see how they could be different. Imagination is integral to NLP and emotional manipulation. Without it, nothing can change. Nothing will change unless we can envision it changing first with our imagination.

People tend to neglect their imaginations in adulthood. We think that the life we already have is the natural and one for us — no other way is possible. If you want your subject to hold a new belief or exhibit a new behavior, you have to get their imagination going so they can see how things can be different.

This is particularly important with a subject in which you already have a relationship. You can still use the seven foundations as usual, as long as you use some common sense along with them. You can use the techniques we show you. But you have to be sure to engage the subject's imagination when you have some sort of relationship with them, especially a close relationship.

That's because when someone already knows you, that means they have already formed very strongly ingrained ideas about you. When someone already has certain expirations of you, it is very hard to get them to change the way they see you. It is far from impossible — if it were, then it wouldn't be possible to use NLP on people you already knew. But it is. You just have to remember that it is harder.

Imagination does the job of rearranging your subject's ideas of you. Once you remind them that things can be different, they are at your disposal to emotionally manipulate. It is important that you remember the physical basis of the mind — that is, the brain.

Neuroscience, as of late, has been incredibly encouraging to NLP practitioners because it shows us that the brain is not a fixed, mystical thing. The brain is a physical thing that is constantly reforming its nearly endless synaptic links. The trillions of links between your billions of neurons change because of every little thing you do.

You might feel like it isn’t possible to capture the imagination of your friend or your family member — you might assume that they already are set in their ways, their beliefs can’t change, and their behaviors can’t change. But neuroscience tells us this isn’t the case. Since all of your thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors ultimately come from these trillions of synaptic links — and because these synaptic links always move around, never staying the same — we know that even someone you know very well can change.

Now that we have established that it is still possible to use NLP on people you already have relationships with — and the fact that capturing their imaginations is integral to the process of doing this — you are now ready to get started learning a practical technique to make this possible.

This one is called episodic provocation. It is called this because of the type of memory it involves: an episodic memory. Briefly, you will need to learn the kinds of memories we form in our brains.

A procedural memory is a memory that allows you to do a skill such as driving a car or cooking a recipe. You don’t have to consciously think about the steps or how to do them because you have formed a procedural memory.

Next, we have the semantic memory. This is a memory that allows you to know facts. Maybe your best subject in school wasn’t history, but you still have some semantic memories tied to historical facts after going to school. Your semantic memory also helps you memorize addresses and phone numbers. Although everyone has phone numbers saved into their devices these days, all of us still have an important phone number or two that we memorized before this era, and we know these phone numbers from our semantic memories.

This brings us to the episodic memory. Episodic memories are autobiographical: they are your memories you have kept about events that happened in your life. For our purposes, we have to focus on the emotional resonances of these episodic memories. That’s because we are less interested in the stale facts about the subjects episodic memory and more interested in the emotional aspect of the

memory.

These emotional resonances present in the subject's episodic memory are what will activate their imagination. They will remember that positive feeling that is part of the memory, and they will want to chase that feeling.

You bring up the change they want to make through your framing, and they will associate the positive feelings from the episodic memory with the frame you give them. They will also associate these positive feelings with you, which is always a positive thing for an emotional manipulator.

These are the general steps you are going to follow, but let's go through them one at a time. To begin with, any time you have a specific technique like episodic provocation, you may be tempted to rush into the technique right away. But you can't do this, because you always have to make the technique seem like a natural part of your interaction with your subject. If the technique feels like a forced part of the interaction from the perspective of your subject, you have not done a good job as an emotional manipulator.

That's why you have to start episodic provocation by having a nice, friendly chat with them.We are talking about someone you are in a romantic or platonic relationship with already, so it should not be too hard to have a pleasant, casual dialogue with them.

In NLP, we call this building rapport with your subject. It isn't the step where you mind control them or manipulate their behavior through an NLP technique, but rather, it is a necessary precursor to doing either of these things. For episodic provocation, it is no different. You have to put them at ease and make them see this as a normal conversation before you can use the technique.

The second step is to start asking slightly more personal questions. This is the step that will eventually get you towards asking them about positive memories. As long as you followed the first step naturally, it shouldn't be a problem to ease into this step naturally. There is nothing wrong with starting to ask them slightly more intimate questions, especially when they are already someone you know.

When the time is right, ask the subject this specific question: “What do you think is the happiest you have ever been?”

Now, as we keep saying, you can’t just come out with this right out of the gate. You have to build up to it. You have to think about how you must build your support so that you can ask this question, and it comes off naturally. This takes practice for a lot of people, but if you don’t think you can reach this point with the subject, that just means you need to improve on your rapport building.

We should touch on rapport building briefly because it is such a big part of NLP in cases like this one. As you might expect, the third foundation of unconscious communication is very useful in rapport. They will feel more comfortable with you the more you accurately read their unconscious cues of communication, and the better you imitate their cues in your imitation. Psychology, of course, is also incredibly helpful, which is why we bring up social science repeatedly through these pages. But you might struggle in all of these things and still succeed in rapport building by following this one simple rule: get the subject to talk about themselves.

Let’s be blunt: people are narcissists. You might have a certain idea of what a narcissist has to be, and that’s not the kind of narcissist we are talking about. There is a mental disorder in which a person obsesses over themselves and doesn’t feel empathy for other people at all. This is known as Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and it is not the kind of narcissism we are talking about. We simply mean that people are self-serving and self-involved. In the end, you would do well to take advantage of the fact that people are in it for themselves. The main thing they care about is what they can get out of it. They want to know how what you are saying relates to them. Don’t forget this.

All of this is to say, the secret to building rapport is to simply exploit human beings’ natural narcissism. If you get a person to start talking about themselves, they will happily take the opportunity you gave them.

The rest is easy. They will talk about their happiest memory, and the positive

emotions intertwined with it will be experienced by their brain yet again. Since you were the person who caused them to experience these feelings again, they will see you as the same as these feelings. This is always good for you when you are doing manipulation techniques.

But for the context of this chapter, even more important is the fact that you got their imagination going. They remember that there is more to life than whatever they are going through right now. They remember that things can be better, thanks to you.

Once they are in this mindset, they are ready to be mind controlled or manipulated. Since you got into their imagination, you are now able to do this, even though they are someone you already have some relationship with.

When we already know someone, this is certainly a tough situation for an emotional manipulator. But they are not the hardest subjects by definition. Certain people just have personalities that make them a lot of work to manipulate. The next chapter addresses these subjects specifically, and we give you the tools you need to emotionally manipulate them.

ADVANCED MANIPULATION METHODS

OUR GOALS as a manipulator can sometimes be quite ambitious. Even if the goals themselves are not ambitious, you will soon find out — if you haven't already — that some people are much more difficult to manipulate than the average person.

These people are ultimately difficult to manipulate because they refuse to give an inch of their power over you. One may be able to bargain with such a person, and that is what this chapter is all about. In situations like this, our last resort is to find a compromise.

The trick is, you have to only make this person believe you are compromising — you can still get everything you want if you play your cards right. That is why it is necessary to have a more advanced technique of emotional manipulation at our disposal.

This chapter covers two key techniques that will allow you to manipulate even the most challenging subjects. Some people make it very hard for us to enter their unconscious, and this can be for a number of reasons. Most of the time, it is because they are the kind of people who are always telling you what they think. They keep on reinforcing their existing beliefs to you, and they keep on justifying their behaviors to you aloud.

When they are already justifying their beliefs and behaviors out loud and consistently, that makes them a lot harder to manipulate. Most people are much

more blank slates when it comes to why they believe and act the way they do. Once you get them to see new reasons or new ways of thinking about things, they start to follow your path instead. But if they don't start as a blank slate, it means you have to go deeper. But since this book specifically gets into the emotional side of manipulation, we will tell you the techniques that will win over any person, because every person can be swayed by fear. And that is the emotion we employ for these techniques.

Even if you think you are having trouble with manipulating them for some other reason, you will still be able to use the information contained here to manipulate them. It is just that these are not easy techniques to accomplish by any means, so when you are using them, it means you are pulling out all the stops to get into their mind. We only recommend trying them when all else fails.

Not only will we go through these two fear-based techniques, but we will have another crucial lesson on the structure and function of the human brain, and how knowing it will help you manipulate harder subjects. Now that you know what you are getting into, let's get started.

Fear and Relief

Although everything we do in emotional manipulation uses dark psychology to some extent, the fear and relief technique may use it the most. Some NLP practitioners have been known to call it the door-in-the-face technique, which is the brother of another technique called the foot-in-the-door phenomenon. Getting familiar with these techniques will help you wrap your head around how fear and relief work.

For the foot-in-the-door phenomenon, your initial goal is to fish for a tiny bit of commitment from the subject. It can be something that seems very small, but it has to be social in nature. It has to be social because people do small behaviors they think are not a big deal, but they actually affect their brains greatly. This is because of the mirror neurons we mentioned before. Once we have engaged

socially with someone, even to the smallest extent, we feel some sort of bond with them. Once that is done, it doesn't feel right for us to simply ignore their wishes or not to do what they say.

This is the dark psychology use in the foot-in-the-door phenomenon. It is named because it is often used by door-to-door sales people when they are trying to get people to buy their product. The salesperson knows they can't ask for much at first, but let's say they are trying to get you to buy their vacuum. After they make the seemingly small request that you let them vacuum cup a tiny area by their front door, they show you how well the vacuum does is job. But even more importantly, you let them ever so slightly into your home. You have fired mirror neurons because of this bond, and it is hard to say no to them, at least compared to before.

This brings us to the door-in-the-face phenomenon, which his more or less our fear and relief technique. Door-in-the-face is when you don't just ask the subject if you can vacuum the entrance by their front door. You toss grape juice over their carpet, but then immediately use the vacuum to show them how it takes all of it out of your carpet.

Now, we aren't telling you to go out there, ruining anyone's carpet. The main thing to take away from this is the fear and relief part of it. You make the subject afraid of potential consequences, but then you show them they had nothing to be worried about in the first place. This works on even the most stubborn subjects because it goes deep into their unconscious with the potent feeling of fear.

Fear and relief is an exemplar of emotional manipulation because of what it can do for NLP practitioners who are struggling to move their subject otherwise. Let's say they don't budge with any technique you use on them. Your goal is to make them adopt one of your political positions — it doesn't matter what for this example, so just imagine one.

By using fear and relief, you can, in fact, help change their mind on their existing beliefs. You just have to make them think there is something to be

feared. It has to be something legitimate they would really believe. Otherwise, it won't work.

Fear is based on our genuine understanding of the world, so they won't be influenced by your technique if they don't see the world in the way you want them to. To some extent, you yourself have to adopt their worldview — if only for the sake of manipulating them in the end — so that you can understand how they think, and what would make them afraid. Tell them something that would make them afraid, but then frame how adopting your political belief would assuage that fear. This is the essence of the fear and relief technique.

This is what we meant in the beginning of the chapter when we said that manipulating difficult subjects involved compromise. It's because if you want to get inside someone's head, you have to know how they think, too. The reason we don't always have to go that deeply into everyone's mind is that with less difficult subjects, they don't necessarily have the most developed ideas about the world. This allows us to mold their mental concepts as we see fit.

But when the subject already has views, this is s different story. These subjects, in particular, have views that they see as well-reasoned and justified. You will have to develop your psychic resistance to ensure you don't get manipulated yourself when you enter someone else's mind. But it is a step you will have to take in the process of figuring out what will make them afraid.

The next technique is called the FOMO technique, and it also relies on the emotion of fear. If either of these techniques work for you still, you will want to brush up on your foundations of emotional manipulation to be sure you have everything covered in that department. With that said, let's move on to the FOMO technique.

FOMO: The Fear of Missing Out

The idea of FOMO, or the fear of missing out, has actually gotten

public attention recently. However, for those of us who practice neurolinguistic programming, it is not a new idea at all. We use it as one of our most trusted techniques when we are dealing with a subject that doesn't seem like they are going to be moved any other way.

You see, the fear of missing out used the most often in advertising. It is a perfect example of how NLP is used in our day-to-day lives — how emotional manipulation is used in our day-to-day lives — and we don't even realize it. Emotional manipulation is simply a part of life, which is an idea you must already have come to terms with by now. By continuing to learn how it works and how to do it better, you are simply better preparing yourself for the realities of life, and for preparing for if someone uses it against you in a malicious way.

Evoking the fear of missing out on your difficult subject is mostly a matter of framing. You have to make them believe there is something they are allowed to be missed as an opportunity if you don't take on the belief or behavior you want them to adopt or take on. For instance, let's say you want them to have that political belief of yours still — whatever it may be. By using the fear of missing out, you are reminding them of something they will not have as an opportunity by continuing against your own path.

Once the subject feels like they are going to lack something because they don't do what you want them to do, this will provoke a strong feeling of fear in their brains. Humans hate feeling like there is nothing we can do about missing out on something if we continue our behavior. Because we hate this feeling that there is something we won't get otherwise, we end up feeling like we have no choice but to do as you say.

But we say framing is vital here because you can't expect them to think they are missing out on something unless you make them believe it. They won't believe it just because you tell them — as we said before, it has to be something that they would really believe.

Get into their mind just as you did for the last technique, and think about

something that they would truly believe that they would be missing out on by not adopting your political viewpoint. It will take some creative thinking and planning, as all effective NLP does. But once you are able to manipulate the mind of this difficult subject, you will see that it is worth it.

If you are having trouble thinking of a frame that fits these requirements, think about how we all have limited time, and how we can use this fact to make the subject question their beliefs and choices. This will get you on the path to finding the frame that will work.

No matter what choices we make, there is something we are missing out on. The truth is, every decision we make has give or take. But when you tell them about this, you don't want to frame it like there is no other way. You want to frame it like they only have limited time, and the time they have left will be spent missing out on the thing that your belief gives them. If you are able to create this frame successfully, you will truly get to the emotional root of this subject, no matter how difficult they have been throughout the process.

We all know deep down that we have made certain choices that have built onto each other over time, and it is only natural to wonder sometimes if there was another path for us to take. As an emotional manipulator, it is your job to get the subject on this road of thinking. Get them to question if the gains they got from their current beliefs were really the right ones to shoot for.

All you have to do is make them think they should aim for the rewards that come with your belief instead. You do this by emphasizing the rewards and the fact that they are mutually exclusive with espousing your belief. They are not possible to obtain with their current mode of thinking.

When we look at this technique from a neuroscience point of view, we can see where this is happening in the brain. When we make the subject believe that what they currently believe won't get them something, this is how you are making them experience the feeling of fear. You are telling them something they know from their executive functioning network that they do not have in their

lives right now. You frame it as something they don't get because of the belief they have.

In the default mode, this is where you get them to actually take on your belief. They start to understand that taking on your belief will change everything for them because they will get the thing that they didn't have before. This transition period is because of their fear of missing out, at the end of the day.

Emotion always comes about because of a tension between the executive functioning network (what we really experience with our senses) and the default mode network (what we know could happen). Once you become a master of controlling the two main networks of your subject's brain, you will get them to believe anything you want. No matter how hard they make it for you at first, no one is immune to the fear of missing out, just as no one is immune to the fear and relief technique.

All of these advanced techniques use neuroscience, so it is only appropriate that we end the chapter with a short new lesson on how other networks than the default mode and executive functioning are arranged, and how they influence our real lives subjectively.

The Layout of the Mind

It is time for you to get even deeper into the structure of the brain, according to the most current *neural networks* understanding. You already know that the executive functioning network has the job of doing whatever you are focused on in the present moment. You know that the default mode is where you think about the meanings of things, where you came from, who you are, and anything where you build a model of something in your head that you are not currently interfacing with. There are a few other major networks to talk about, but these ones are a lot less complicated. This is because they mostly correspond to our most basic senses.

We are coming networks together that are usually divided into different parts for the sake of simplicity, but in this context of NLP, you don't really need to know that we have a different neural network for upper vision than for middle vision. To start out, we have a visual network, an auditory network, and a sensorimotor network. The visual network is where our brain processes what we see; the auditory network, what we hear, and the sensorimotor network is where we actually configure our muscles to move in specific ways.

The only new network that doesn't relate to simple senses is called the salience network. The salience network is fascinating because is job is to determine what is worth paying attention to in any given moment. It is important for you to know about the salience network because, ultimately, you want to change what the subject's salience network classifies as important to pay attention to. After all, how do you think you will get them to change their mind or behavior if they think there is nothing new they need to pay attention to?

You will find it helpful to consider it from this angle, but the good thing is, the emotional aspect of emotional manipulation will do the trick of activating your subject's salience network. The resonance of emotion is so powerful that it will cause a human brain to reconsider what matters enough to bring our attention towards.

But we bring up these networks to give you a fuller picture of the mechanisms you are interacting with when you manipulate someone. It may depend on what kind of person you are, but it might be helpful to think about emotional manipulation not as molding a person but molding a brain.

You activate their salience network by using an NLP technique that activates their emotional response; you cause the subject to envision how things could be different if they went your way in the default mode network; and next, this translates in the executive functioning network when the tension between the two networks becomes too great for them to handle. They can't stand the incentive you gave them only being in their head, and now they will do anything to obtain it in real life — in the executive functioning network.

As good as it is to have all of these advanced techniques ready to go for more difficult subjects, we still cannot stress enough how important our fundamental skills are in emotional manipulation.

If you don’t have the seven foundations mastered, it doesn’t matter if you follow every step of these techniques perfectly. They won’t get you the results you want. That’s why we have an entire chapter devoted to the developed skills of emotional manipulation. In the chapter, you will learn how to acquire proper state control, sensory acuity, and unconscious communication so you can use these crucial skills in your NLP manipulation.

DEVELOPED SKILLS TO BECOME A MANIPULATOR

IT IS natural for us to want to rush into emotional manipulation without too much thought. There is so much we want to do, and so many social barriers that seem to be in our way. However, if you don't have some of the fundamental skills discussed in this chapter, none of the techniques you learn here are going to matter.

These are skills that any good instructor of NLP would teach you, and luckily you are already familiar with their role from learning the seven foundations of emotional manipulation in the first chapter. The first skill you need is called state control. State control is your capacity for expressing the emotion you need to instead of the one you would naturally feel. Now we will go further than telling you its job and explain how to achieve good state control.

It may seem overly simplistic, but there is one vital thing you must do if you hope to ever achieve proper state control: you need to know how to breathe properly. That is, you need to know how to breathe deeply. Deep breathing matters a lot in state control. It isn't nearly enough to achieve it, but it is necessary to do anything else well enough in this developed NLP skill.

Although it might sound less important than the next thing, we teach you about honing your state control, deep breathing matters greatly because it ensures you are getting enough oxygen to your brain. If you can't think clearly because you aren't getting enough oxygen, it doesn't matter how well you use our strategy for

acquiring state control. This strategy requires you to have your head in the right place, and these days, we get extremely stressed by living our lives. Our natural state is slightly stressed, and you can't be in this state when you attempt to achieve state control with anchoring.

The first thing to do with deep breathing is taking it slowly. You need to breathe in through your nose and feel the air physically go "deep" into your body. You should actually be able to feel the difference in how far int the air goes. Don't be misled into thinking you are deep breathing just because you are not breathing as fast as you usually do. The only way you can tell if you're doing it is if you feel the air touch deep inside your chest.

Once you have deep breathing down, keep at it for a few minutes. Only then should you move onto the step of anchoring.

You actually know quite a bit about anchoring already, because it is more or less the extent of what we accomplish with the extra sense of imagination. We keep bringing up how important this extra sense is, and the effectiveness of anchoring as an NLP strategy towards state control will prove that for you. Even when you are alone, you will be able to notice the difference in your mind and body from your mere imagination.

In the previous chapter, you got the subject to look back on a fond memory so that they would remember how things could be different. For the purposes of state control, anchoring is no different. All you have to do is focus on the emotion you desire to have. It should be easy to think of a memory that would have that emotion in it.

Any emotion out there is going to be necessary to express when you are emotionally manipulating someone. Remember, state control is not simply showing no emotion. It is to some extent because you can't be affected by what the subject feels. However, this is not as far as state control goes. You also need to express whatever emotion that will help you in the long-term goal of emotional manipulation.

That means you need to have every emotion at your disposal. You may not think of yourself as an actor, but all NLP manipulators have to learn how to act in a way. You don’t even have to think of it as acting. This is not so much acting as it is re-experiencing all those same emotions again.

Whether we want to fee las, angry, anxious, or anything else to benefit our interaction with the subject, we find that using the time-tested technique of anchoring will get us to succeed in our goal.

Now that you know the secrets behind mastering state control, you will need to learn about how one improves in their sensory acuity. Now, we did tell you that you need to surrender your control over to your senses. This is honestly the most important thing you can do for your sensory acuity. Even some of the most advanced NLP practitioners will overthink their senses, send-guess them, and otherwise micromanage them in a way that hinders their sensory acuity rather than helps it.

If you don’t make this mistake, you have already done most of the work of improving your sensory acuity. However, there are still some things you can do to improve your sense. Some of more obvious than others. For example, if you have bad vision, you need to make sure you wear your glasses around your subject, or else you will miss important details; if you have bad hearing, get closer to them so you can hear them without asking them to repeat themselves.

There are extra senses, too. To hone your sense of empathy, it is scientifically proved that reading will do the trick. That means all you have to do to hone your extra sense of empathy is read books.

Your sense of unconscious communication is the last thing we mention in this chapter, so we will return to that later. Your sense of instinct can be honed by simply listening to your gut instinct when they occur. Sometimes, people can lose touch with it, but it is always there

Finally, have insight and imagination. We think we have covered imagination reasonably well — if you keep using anchoring to practice state control and to

capture your subject's imagination, that should do it for that sense. Improving insight will be pretty similar to improving empathy: if you read more books, you will have more knowledge and understanding of the world, improving this sense and making you a better emotional manipulator.

The last developed skill of NLP for us to tackle is unconscious communication. We covered this one pretty thoroughly when going through the foundations of emotional manipulation, but that doesn't mean you don't need to know any more to improve this skill.

We will start with unconscious verbal communication. If you want to get better with the unconscious messages we send through our actual words, you have to start listening to people more. The best thing you can do to improve in this area is going out in public and listening to people talk. You will find yourself start to enjoy this experience, but you will learn a lot along the way.

We already have a good grasp on what people mean by the words they say, so just like with your sensory acuity, you shouldn't overthink the exact messages being sent through unconscious verbal communication, or any unconscious communication, for that matter. If your gut tells you what messages are being sent, your gut probably knows best.

Another important fact about body language is to pay attention to the space the subject leaves between their feet. When the subject leaves a very small space, they are doing this because they feel comfortable It might sound counterintuitive, but this is because when we are standing with our legs close together, we are very easy to push over. Of course, this only applies to when people are standing. If they are sitting and their feet are close together, this is more a sign of submissiveness. As always, you have to take body language with the social context.

But if they are standing and their feet are far apart, that is a sign that they don't feel at ease with you yet. This means you still have more work to do to get into their unconscious, and it is not yet time to move from imitation into framing.

The next chapter focuses more on the emotional manipulation techniques, while this chapter was more focused on the developed skills necessary to reach that point. Never forget that both sides of the coin are necessary for effectively emotionally manipulating somebody.

You may know exactly what to do in our techniques, but you allow yourself to be moved by your subject’s emotions. You aren’t going to change their mind in any way with such an unsatisfactory grasp on state control. Both the developed skills and the techniques need to be put into practice in order to make effective emotional manipulation happen.

MANIPULATION TECHNIQUES AND RULES

THIS CHAPTER WILL TELL you more about the most basic techniques in emotional manipulation that every NLP learner should know. Not every single one of them will apply to your life, but you will still find something to learn from each of them. Let me give you an example of how this works.

Imagine you are in a busy restaurant and some special cuisine is served. You are very happy with the dish, so you ask the waiter to give your compliments to the chef. You do this in front of your colleagues from work at the table.

It may seem like a small gesture, but it is small gestures like these that create a personality that people will see you as. It makes you seem classy and respectable, and this is an aura that people want to be around.

When we talk about “rules” in emotional manipulation, this is what we are talking about. You can’t simply live life passively, not thinking about any of your choices. In every aspect of NLP, you have to think about how your behavior and words appear from the outside. You have to set rules for yourself about what kinds of things will come out of your mouth and what kinds of behaviors people will see you do.

Now, this might seem like this is just normal adult behavior. This is a normal part of growing up that you have already done. But the problem here is that you are assuming you have already done everything you can to make sure your behavior is in good shape for NLP.

The moment you assume you already are doing the right thing, you will slip up, and your subject will think you are not someone worth listening to. Instead, you need to become like the kind of person we described in the scenario at the beginning of the book. You want people to see you as classy, respectable, smart, articulate, and so on. People aren't going to see you this way simply because this is how you see yourself, or because you tell them you are these things.

In real life — just as in stories — we have to show, not tell. We can't simply tell our subjects what to believe about us. They will form their own judgments either way. That means our only option is to convince them we are all of these things by following certain rules we set for ourselves. The rules we set ensure that our subjects get the exact idea of us that we want them to have.

When you follow your set rules and your subject knows about this reputation of yours, these techniques will have a much higher success rate. Keep that in mind as you proceed.

Our first technique is called visual-kinesthetic dissociation. This one is a pretty advanced one, but as far along as you are in our book, you are ready for it.

This technique depends on the same understanding of the brain's neural networks that we have already taught you. In short, the visual-kinesthetic dissociation technique is when you get your subject to forget about something you don't want them to remember by introducing something new into their mind.

The new thing you introduce must have a visual and kinesthetic quality, thus the name visual-anesthetic dissociation. You are causing them to dissociate from the memory and associate instead with the visual or kinesthetic stimulus that should replace it.

Here is an example. Let's say your subject is recalling a memory that you don't want them to have. Now, you might even be thinking right now that there isn't a specific memory you want them to let go of. But this is only because you are not thinking tactically enough yet as an emotional manipulator.

Remember, the emotional resonances of our memories are the most important things. If your subject has a memory that ties together (1) positive emotions and (2) the belief and behavior you don't want them to have anymore, this poses a serious problem for you. In fact, it may be outright impossible for you to replace this belief or behavior until you get them to let go of that memory.

Of course, getting someone to let go of a memory sounds like a thing of science fiction. But it is possible through this technique. It is because we are not quite getting them to forget it directly. Instead, we are getting them to replace the synaptic links they have of it with something else.

It has been a while since we explained, so let's review again how memories form on a neuronal level. Your neurons form synaptic links between one another when you form new memories. But importantly, they can't just form infinite new connections. They have to forgo old connections that aren't being used, because there is only so much space, even between billions of neurons.

This is the neuroscience that allows visual-kinesthetic dissociation to work. We are able to introduce a new, tactile, and optical stimuli that should replace the old memory. They are kinesthetic and visual in particular because these senses are especially memorable. They are the most likely to replace the memory you don't want your subject to have. You are free to try to use other senses to the same end, and it could be a good experiment. But if you want to stay on the safer side, use visual-kinesthetic dissociation to get them to forget the memory.

The theory for this one is more complicated, but the practice is rather simple. Don't bring up the memory yourself, because you don't want them to reinforce it even further because someone else brought it up. Instead, you have to be ready to use visual-kinesthetic dissociation at any time.

When the memory does come up, you need to reintroduce visual and kinesthetic senses into their imagination. You also have the option of giving it in real life to their executive functioning network. You could do something like play with a stress ball or look at pretty art while they talk about the memory. You need to do

it prominently enough so that they have no choice but to look at it or feel it too. If you do this every time the memory comes up, there is a very good chance they won't have as strong of a memory over time.

While this chapter went in depth on an especially helpful technique in advanced emotional manipulation, the next chapter specifically goes into the subject of using your words to emotionally manipulate others. It is what will give you an edge over the other NLP practitioners out there, who generally don't focus on their control of language as much as they do their techniques. If you master your words, too, you will be an unstoppable force in neurolinguistic programming.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION THROUGH WORDS

NEUROLINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING IS ALWAYS about communication. However, it is not just about words. So far, we mostly concentrated on the forms of communication that don't use words: body language, voice, posture, eye contact, and facial expression.

But words still matter in NLP, even if they can sometimes be overshadowed by these things. In fact, to say they still matter is an understatement, because what makes the difference because your average fledgling emotional manipulator and a master emotional manipulator is a confident control of language.

You will find that a strong command of language is most useful in the seventh foundation of emotional manipulation: framing. This is because when we can use our words in an intentional way, we can paint the truth however we please for our subject. Words establish some laws of logic they can follow. As long as the internal logic fits together in their minds, they will feel like they have no choice but to agree with what you say.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves because framing itself is incorporated into all the techniques in this book, so you don't need to overthink it too much. However, we will give you some tips on how to speak in a way that makes people take you seriously.

Our first tip is to learn grammar. It is a popular idea out there that grammar doesn't matter, but this is far from the truth. The problem with incorrect

grammar isn’t that people will be specifically bothered by specific grammar errors you commit.

The truth is, most people out there don’t know all the rules of grammar that well, so this is not the problem. The problem is that on an unconscious level, people still know proper grammar from improper grammar. Even if you can’t name all the parts of speech and conjugate every verb correctly in the past perfect tense, you can still unconsciously tell when someone does it right.

This is what makes proper grammar so powerful. You may think it seems like a silly thing to focus on, but when you pronounce words correctly, use the right words, and don’t conjugate words incorrectly, people know. They don’t think to themselves consciously that you did everything right, but deep down in their unconscious, they notice that you are a well-spoken individual. When someone sees you this way, it means they see you as educated, wise, insightful, and so on. These are all good things for someone to see you as, when you want to manipulate them.

Therefore, using words in NLP is not so different from simply speaking in good English in any other context. Just as in any other context, when we use words properly, people unconsciously notice.

Of course, we can’t provide you with a full lesson on grammar and mechanics, but there are a few things that are noteworthy. Mainly, we want you to think about the specific areas of language and how to improve them. First, we have usage.

Usage is not actually a part of grammar, but they are closely related. Usage is merely the term for using words correctly. It means not using a big word for something it doesn’t actually mean. We know it is hard to do when you want to impress people, but do yourself a favor, and don’t use words unless you are absolutely positive, you know what they mean. You will sound much smartest when you use simpler words that everyone can understand, and you don’t embarrass yourself by using a bigger word that someone realizes you use the

wrong way.

The next area you can focus on is plain old grammar. There is no quick way to learn grammar: simply pick up a style book at a bookstore and start reading it. This may sound like a pain, but we told you from the beginning that being able to use words well would be key to mastering emotional manipulation. If you aren't willing to do this, then you aren't willing to master manipulation.

Our next area of language is enunciation. This one is similar to all areas of language. The issue is, people get this idea in their heads that someone who uses complicated words is smart, and someone who doesn't isn't as smart. But the truth is, the person using complicated words just learned them from somewhere. They got the words from the dictionary, which anyone can pick up and read from.

If you want to use bigger words, nothing is stopping you from looking in the dictionary and finding some that would actually be useful. Likewise, if you want to know how to enunciate words properly – that way, you aren't so afraid of using your new words — use the little megaphone buttons on dictionary sites. They will speak the word for you so that you know how it is pronounced.

People might feel odd at first listening to words you think that you should know how to pronounce, but you need to leave that shame behind. It doesn't make you a better manipulator. Owning up to what you don't know is what will make you a better manipulator. The only way to get better with words is to acknowledge your shortcomings.

So far, we only covered the intellectual part of language. There is also the physical part of it that can sometimes intimidate people. We have gone over how to make sure you are enunciating words properly and pronouncing words properly, because this is different from speaking. When we speak words, we give them new meanings than they have on their own. You have to make sure the delivery of your words respects them for what they are.

You could have the most inspiring speech of the decade, but if you deliver it like

you are ashamed of your own words, no one will listen to you. This is something you need to remember always when you are speaking your own words. All of us have something to say. The more you follow the tips in this chapter, the more eloquently you will say them. So be confident in your words and deliver them like they mean something . If you do that, people will believe you, and they will listen.

Our next chapter is our last, and it applies everything we have learned to the art of seduction. You will find that mastering spoken English is particularly useful here, so we hope you are ready for these spicy tips.

STRATEGIES IN SEDUCTION THROUGH MANIPULATION

HERE, we will explain the key differences between successful conversationalists, successful emotional manipulators, and notorious romancers. You can be both of the first two without succeeding in the third, and who doesn't want to be able to successfully seduce anyone they want?

When you know how to get into someone's mind with sultry, emotional manipulation, it doesn't matter who you are or how much is in your wallet, despite what some people may say.

At the end of the day, the thing people will listen to the most is their emotions, and we will tell you how to handle someone's emotions just the right way, so they go crazy for you.

This is the perfect chapter to end on because we will show you how to use all seven foundations of emotional manipulation to seduce someone.

First, we have state control. State control on your end means not being bothered by rejection. Being rejected doesn't reflect on you in any way. It only reflects on the situation, the disposition the subject had at the time, and your own delivery. If any of these things change, you can turn a rejection into a date. But if you don't manage your state control, you will lose hope with this person and never get anywhere. Be sure not to take state control for granted in seduction.

But don't forget that state control is also controlling the emotional state of the

subject, and this is everything in seduction. Now, it is a little different here, because you don’t want them to feel a negative emotion.

In other cases, it is fine for them to feel a negative emotion for the purposes of them seeing things your way in the end. But in romantic affairs, our senses are too fragile to be too negative valences. Therefore, you need to control their state in a more gentle way. As we move through the rest of the seven foundations, you will see what we mean.

Next, there is sensory acuity. Especially when it comes to seduction, the senses are everything. You need to make sure your love interest in experiencing positive sensations around you. Are you making sure they are drinking a sweet drink? Do you smell good? Does your skin look soft to the touch? Is there music playing, or is there a lot of noise? We understand that some of these things are outside of your control, depending on the social environment, but some of them are in your control.

Of course, the most obvious part of sensory acuity here is managing your looks. But we all know what we do to spruce up our appearance, so this book is more concerned about how we maintain positive extra senses for your love interest.

Make sure you are paying attention to their unconscious body language. All of our lessons in that area apply to seduction as well. Use your insight to read between the lines when they speak.

Finally, use your imagination to strategize how you can change things between the two of you. And use your sense of imagination to get them to see you and them as a possibility. It may be that you are not even in their view. This doesn’t even have to be a bad thing; sometimes, it is not personal. They might not even think they are looking for someone right now. Getting them to see you as a possibility might just mean seeing anyone as a possibility. But following all these other techniques will make sure it is you.

Next, the foundation of unconscious communication comes into play. Ask yourself what your love interest is doing with their eye contact. How are you

responding to it? Does their body language look relaxed? Do they look like they are in charge, or like they are waiting for permission?

Voice and emotion in the voice can make the difference between knowing what is on your love interest's mind or being completely clueless. Sometimes, they give us clear signs of what they are thinking. Other times, they completely leave us in the dark. But we have to be sure to listen for these things either way because we can't afford to miss something.

The fourth foundation of neuroscience comes into it because of the mirror neurons. Remember that the best way to get mirror neurons to fire is to tell a story. Now, with a love interest, you can't just jump into a conversation with a story though. You have to make sure it feels relevant to them. But this is what will seduce them. This is what will get them to have deeply felt emotions for you.

Psychology, the fifth foundation, plays its part in the dark psychology of social comparison. It is a forbidden truth that social standing plays a big role in the selection of mates in the real world. That means you may have to manage your social affrays before you can get with this person. It depends entirely on their goals. But dark psychology doesn't lie. The most attractive thing a woman can find in a man is the impression that other women want them.

This may seem strange, but we see this isn't the animal kingdom, as well as in research on humans. It seems like when women think other women want someone, it makes them want that man, too. It is probably a good extrapolation to make that the same goes the other way around.

Imitation is self-explanatory for seduction. Do whatever unconscious cues of communication they are doing, and they will let you deeper into their unconscious. Nothing changes here in the realm of seduction. The seventh foundation — framing — is where you finally land the date. You need to follow the techniques and rules from the previous chapter, and make sure you have presented yourself in a consistent way so far. After you have done so, you can

reach the event step and frame yourself in a certain attractive light that can’t be denied. They saw this was all true based on the rules you followed.

If you go by all these guidelines, you will have anyone worshipping you at your feet, because everyone loves to be emotionally manipulated, particularly in the context seduction. Whether we want to admit it or not, it makes us excited, and it makes us feel thrilled.

We like to feel submissive, sometimes. It makes us feel good to think someone else is in control. This applies to the area of seduction as much as it does anywhere else.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for making it through to the end of *Manipulation Techniques*.

It may not have been an easy road, but all these chapters later, you understand the inner workings of the human mind. With this knowledge, there is an endless number of things you could choose to do. You may decide to influence the rich and the powerful so you can join or surpass them.

Maybe instead, you want to use the rules of manipulation to get the exact partner you are looking for. One could even use the lessons in this book to earn a name for themselves in politics.

No matter what you are trying to do, you will find it to be much easier now that you can speak the language of the mind.

Above all, be sure you don’t lose sight of the foundations of neurolinguistic programming. The underlying foundations of NLP make everything we do in emotional manipulation work. If you try to mind read your manager, sell an idea with your mere words, or seduce someone without following these foundations, your attempts at manipulation will not be effective.

The techniques may work sometimes, but you won’t be able to count on them dependably without knowing these founding concepts like the back of your hand. Understanding the founding principles of NLP is the key to your consistent success.

Once you understand the framework of NLP like second nature, the next thing you should focus on is developing your essential NLP skills. The skills you should work on are described in Chapter 5.

The only way you can do this is by practicing them every day. Remember not only to pay attention to when you use them in your manipulation techniques but to pay attention to them when they are used against you.

Finally, if you enjoyed this book, a review on Amazon is always appreciated!

NLP

An Essential Guide

Kathrin Deshotels

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome, and thank you for purchasing NLP: *An Essential Guide.* While there are many books about Neuro-Linguistic Programming available, this guide will be the one to give you clear-cut, easy-to-follow answers to all your questions about the time-tested mental technique, its practical applications, and how you can use NLP in your everyday life. Whether you want to learn NLP to improve your self-esteem, set and achieve goals, be a more effective communicator, or discover how to see yourself and those around you in a more positive way, this book is the map you'll need to start your journey.

NLP, or neuro-linguistic programming, is a behavioral methodology based on the theory that your thoughts (neuro) and your words (linguistic) have a distinct influence on your behavior (programming). The basic premise of NLP is this: if you can change the way you think and speak, you will begin to exhibit different behavior and change the way you act. You can also think of NLP as being based in perception- your perception of the world around you, your perception of yourself, and other people's perception of you.

Neuro-linguistic programming was developed by two researchers, Richard Bandler, who was an author and self-help coach, and John Grinder, a linguist, and consultant, in the 1970s. Working out of their office in California, Bandler and Grinder sought to put a distinct system and approach to the earlier work of famous therapist Virginia Satir, as well as the work of others like Fritz Perls and Milton Erickson.

Satir, Perls, and Erickson were all pioneers in the field of modern psychotherapy, and Satir is known as the Mother of Family Therapy. She believed that treating the family unit as a whole and addressing the underlying root causes of dysfunction would uplift the health of the entire family. Using these principles, Satir helped her clients become, as she chose to express it, “more fully human.”

When Bandler and Grinder were contemplating how best to model neuro-linguistic programming, they leaned heavily on Satir’s work as it could be applied to an individual rather than a family. Thus, NLP is primarily a self-practice, but one that can be applied to many real-world situations and can help you better connect and relate to others.

NLP is a method that can help you learn more about yourself, your friends, and loved ones, your colleagues, and even people you’ve just met. It can help you be a stronger thinker, a more confident speaker, and a better listener. NLP can be used to determine your short- and long-term goals and how to reach them. Neuro-linguistic programming also has practical applications in the realm of identifying and facing phobias and overcoming ‘mental blocks’ when you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

These are just a few of the amazing ways learning NLP can help you. In the chapters that follow, we’ll examine how to determine what kind of thinker you are and how to learn the same thing about the people around you. We’ll also look at ways to visualize your future and find ways to achieve your goals, all while discovering how NLP can develop your communication skills and improve your interpersonal relationships. Each chapter will include lists of key questions or concepts to help you examine and recap the major elements. There is also a glossary at the end of the book to help you become familiar with the terms frequently used in NLP. Now that you’ve got an overview of the topics that we’ll be leading you through let’s get you started on the path to achieving a clear mind and a better life through neuro-linguistic programming.

UNDERSTANDING HOW YOU THINK

EVERYONE HAS a different manner of thinking, and how you process your thoughts can play a huge role in your behavior, your attitude, and ultimately, your success in your work life and your interpersonal relationships. Broadly, we tend to think of people as being either abstract or linear thinkers, although it is possible to be both.

In general, abstract thinkers are creative types. They don't always see from Point A to Point B. Their minds are filled with images and ideas that take time to formulate into something concrete. In the business world, these are the people that are 'outside the box,' often coming up with solutions seemingly out of thin air. These solutions are the product of sifting through a rushing jumble of thoughts to reach a conclusion.

Linear thinkers are focused on the end result and finding the straightest path to attain it. They tend to break a problem down into logical chunks, each designed to build to the next until a goal is reached. Linear thinkers compartmentalize and set aside the ideas that don't seem to fit any purpose. In some ways, the difference between abstract and linear thinkers can be summed up with a pop culture trope- that of Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock in the original Star Trek.

In the stories, Kirk is always thinking about creative ways to settle the conflicts the Enterprise crew finds itself in, and the character is infamous for finding a way to cheat the Starfleet Academy's no-win Kobayashi Maru test. Spock is

focused solely on dealing with each problem through logic. The two men think very differently, but the conflict always comes to a satisfactory conclusion when they work together to solve it. While this is obviously because TV shows need to wrap up their stories, it's also a striking example of why both abstract and linear thinkers are so crucial to real-world society.

While it's important to recognize if you are an abstract or linear thinker, for the purposes of neuro-linguistic programming, determining how you think is more about discovering how you process emotions, how well or poorly you can visualize situations, and whether or not you are a positive or negative thinker. Being able to identify and understand how you think is one of the first steps in learning and applying NLP to your life.

Are You Emotional or Stoic?

When faced with a major decision or overly stressful situation, what's your first reaction? How you initially respond to negative stimuli says a lot about how your brain is wired, no matter what happens after the 'first blow' is delivered. No one likes to receive bad news, but how we react can tell us how to apply NLP.

Let's use an example:

John is your coworker, and he's been working on a crucial client presentation. You know the material, but not nearly as thoroughly as he does. On the day of the big meeting, John gets into a car accident and breaks a few bones. He'll be fine, but now the responsibility is on you to seal the deal because the clients won't reschedule. How do you react?

First, let's look at the negative stimuli:

- John is your friend, and he's hurt!

- John is your coworker, and you've got to do his job.

- You're frustrated because the clients refuse to postpone the meeting.

If you are an emotional thinker, your initial response likely would include a bit

of a freak-out, perhaps some crying or swearing. If you are a stoic thinker, you would take all of that negative stimuli and push it aside, because you cannot do anything about the situation. It's okay to be either; there is no wrong answer here. That's because the emotional thinker can use NLP to calm down and set a goal for the task at hand- in this case, the business meeting- and the stoic thinker can use NLP to determine how they think John would have handled the meeting and *model* their behavior off his.

Modeling is a term you'll see heavily used throughout this book, and it is a staple of neuro-linguistic programming. We'll be getting more in-depth into mental modeling and visualization as we move through all our various chapters. NLP cannot be properly applied without a solid understanding of modeling and how to use it.

For this very basic example, you would be modeling your behavior from John's, based on what you know of his material preparation, his personality, and his business demeanor. When we model what we see in others, we can begin to achieve what others have achieved.

How's Your Imagination?

Imagination is a concept we hear about from a very young age. Small children who complain of being bored are often told, "Go play! Use your imagination!" But what exactly *is* imagination? How can we use it in relation to NLP?

Imagination is defined in the dictionary as the 'action of forming ideas or images of external concepts that are not present to the senses.' In reality, what does that mean? It means that imagination is what helps us to conjure up a character for a story we're writing, picture a drawing in our minds before putting pencil to paper, or come up with plans and designs during brainstorming sessions. Imagination is actually a cognitive function, one that allows us to think before we act.

Such cognitive functions are at the heart of the methodology of NLP, and that's why imagination is crucial to being able to practice NLP properly. But what if

you’re a person that thinks they have no imagination? Truthfully, you have a much greater capacity for imagination than you think, you probably just haven’t learned to apply it. Don’t worry, because you’re never too old to learn!

Another reason you might feel you’re not imaginative is that you actually are, and don’t realize it. Many people who consider themselves to be linear thinkers feel that they lack imagination. This is simply not true- being able to logically solve complex problems by creating a series of steps or functions is completely imaginative, just as imaginative as someone who designs botanical gardens or works as a song-writer. Creativity and imagination are not limited to abstract, artistic thinkers.

Imagination is at the heart of every human endeavor and accomplishment. Scientists and engineers got astronauts to the moon because someone imagined it was possible. Organ transplants and complex brain surgeries occur daily around the world because someone was brave enough to ask, “what if?” Without imagination, the human race would stop creating the technological and artistic advancements that make 21st-century life so incredible.

If you don’t think that you’re imaginative, you can try to build your skills as you would any other cognitive skill- through exercise and practice. If you don’t regularly use your imagination, it will atrophy like an unused muscle. Take time to think about hypothetical situations and muse about ‘what ifs.’ Find a new interest or hobby, and immerse yourself in learning. The more we learn, the more we learn to ask what’s next.

No matter what age you are, we can all benefit from toys. Things like blocks and bricks, coloring books, and doodle pads can get our imaginations back in shape. They force us to focus on a task while leaving the result open-ended. That freedom to create can get your imaginative juice flowing. Picture puzzles like rebuses are also great ways to get you thinking, as are logic puzzles and brainteasers.

You can also try little mental exercises like ‘imaginary vacations.’ Go online and

search for beautiful images from around the world. Choose one and try to picture yourself traveling there. What sights would you see? What foods would you eat or what activities would you try? It's an exercise that isn't time-consuming, but that gets you thinking beyond the confines of your everyday life. Perhaps it will lead to you searching for more information about a country or a culture, opening up more and more neural pathways as you learn new things.

The more you exercise your imagination, the stronger it will become. No matter whether you are a linear or abstract thinker, an emotional or stoic responder, imagination is key to being able to practice NLP in an effective manner. Choosing to expand your knowledge, challenging yourself through puzzles, and creating scenarios that need conceptual thought are all great ways to work on your imaginative skills.

Optimism, Pessimism, and Realism…Where Does NLP Fit In?

When it comes to using neuro-linguistic programming, your attitude and your outlook are just as important as your imagination. If you're being honest, do you consider yourself to be a positive person, a negative person, or a realist? How you see the world can have a major effect on how and why you would use NLP, and it's important to be able to distinguish whether you are an optimist or a pessimist. Some people are right in the middle and could consider themselves realists or pragmatists.

Optimism is born of an innately positive outlook on the world. People who are optimists are able to see the bright side or silver lining in any situation, tend to believe that people are inherently good, and are generally happy with their lot in life. Optimists also try to spread their optimism by encouraging others through difficult situations. It's not hard to spot an optimist in a crowd, and sometimes their cheerful nature can be off-putting to those who do not share their energy. That being said, optimism, like all states of mind, can be contagious- sometimes spending time with an optimist can lighten your own mood.

This isn't to say that optimists are naïve or that they are always rays of sunshine.

Even the most concrete optimists are allowed to have bad days, feel negative emotions, and have people that they do not like or trust. It's just that for optimists, there is a strong sense of belief that for whatever negativity is occurring, there is a positive solution. Optimists also tend to be persistent, sometimes to a fault. They can believe so strongly in finding an answer or completing a task, that they simply don't know when to give up.

Pessimism, by contrast, is a negative outlook. People who are pessimists are always waiting for bad things to happen. Pessimism is a difficult approach to life, but there are many reasons that it manifests. Some pessimists are people who have had a rough life, perhaps riddled with past abuses or unhappy scenarios. These people may have become pessimists as a defense mechanism, believing that if they expect the worst, they can't be disappointed.

Some people are natural pessimists, and it's just that they are wired towards the negative. Pessimism can also be borne of mental health considerations, like depression or anxiety. When you are caught in a cycle of pessimism and negative thoughts due to mental illness, it can be difficult to break that cycle without intervention. If you are feeling pessimistic due to poor mental health, please don't hesitate to seek out the proper counseling and treatment.

Pessimisms can be as contagious as optimism. This is another example of modeling, called *mirroring*. We'll delve deep into mirroring and modeling a little later, but everyone can relate to the feeling of one person changing the entire mood of a room, either positively or negatively. How we feel and how we think are transferred to those around us through more than words; sometimes, *body language* and someone's overall energy can affect us more than things that are spoken aloud.

Some people have a very neutral outlook on life and fall into a middle category that can be referred to as realist or pragmatist. Realists take every situation as it comes to them and judges it on its own merits. Realists are very practical when it comes to problem-solving and finding solutions, operating on the belief that there is an answer to every question without allowing their belief to be colored

by optimism or pessimism.

This doesn't mean that realists live without emotion, or that they never swing to either side of the optimism/pessimism spectrum. It simply means that they don't allow positivity or negativity to influence the way they think. Realists take every aspect of a situation into consideration and choose the best course of action based upon weighing all factors, realizing that even the best possible outcome may not be perfect, and a worst-case scenario doesn't always mean absolute disaster.

Now that we've looked at the many ways that people can be categorized as thinkers, you've hopefully been able to identify yourself from the descriptions. The next step in preparing to learn NLP and completing your '*thinker profile*' is to look at how and when people, including you, do your best thinking.

What's Your Optimal Thinking Environment?

No matter what type of thinker you are, you also have to consider what type of environment best suits you. Are you someone that requires complete silence, or do you need a little noise? What time of day do you do your best thinking? Some people wake up raring to go, and some people are night owls who claim their best productivity after dinner and into the late hours.

You won't always be in a position to think in the environment that's best for you, so it's important to identify your style and find ways to adapt to the stimuli around you. Night owls who work a 9-5 in a major office building might like to do the minimum during the day and save the most important parts of their work to take home with them at night. Depending on the office environment, a night owl thinker could also ask to work an off-shift from home a few times a week rather than come into the office every day. Technology has made working remotely a greater possibility in a variety of fields.

For people who need absolute quiet to think, technology offers a variety of solutions, such as noise-canceling headphones. If you are a person who does their best thinking while in a quiet space, consider asking if you can work in a

conference room or other out-of-the-way room rather than in the main part of your office. Laptop computers and cell phones make it possible for any space to be a workspace these days.

If you cannot leave your designated desk space or office, brainstorm ways to make your work area more conducive to your type of thinking. Perhaps you can turn the ringer off on your desk phone and designate a few times a day to check and return messages, barring anything urgent that needs to be handled. Ask your nearby cubicle neighbors to please not be too loud, as they should in an open office plan regardless. Like the night owl thinker, try to keep important projects aside that you can work on in a better environment for your own optimal thinking.

People who need a little bit of noise when they think are the most adaptable. They are able to work through the background sounds of a normal work environment and can create a comfortable thinking zone for themselves anywhere by playing music through their earbuds or by putting the television on low for white noise. For some, a lack of stimuli is too quiet, but the bustle of noise around them makes them feel connected and energized.

For still others, optimal thinking is achieved during other activities. Who hasn't had a brilliant light bulb go off while in the shower? Sometimes it takes focusing on physical activity for our brains to be able to complete their mental gymnastics. Going for a walk or run can get the blood flow and oxygenation that the brain needs to kick into high gear. Being outdoors or finding even the smallest change in the environment can also jump-start our minds to tackle problems.

What does this all have to do with NLP? Because neuro-linguistic programming is based on how you think, it's crucial to understand your thinker profile before you begin practicing NLP. Knowing what kind of thinker you are and being able to use that as a starting point will make your NLP experience more successful and rewarding. Now that we've gone over how to determine where you lie on the thinking spectrum, you can ask yourself:

- Am I an abstract or linear thinker?

- Do I respond to stimuli emotionally or stoically?

- In what ways do I use, or can I improve my imagination?

- Am I an optimist, pessimist, or realist?

- When do I do my best thinking?

- What stimuli, activity, or environment do I need to do my best thinking?

- What's my overall thinker profile?

Now that you've got a solid concept of what type of thinker you are, we'll move on to how you can apply yourself and use NLP to mold and adapt your thoughts through mind management and *compartmentalization*. It's an early step in the neuro-linguistic programming methodology that you'll use to build upon for all your NLP applications. Let's take a look!

MIND MANAGEMENT

HAVE you ever found your thoughts so jumbled that you couldn't figure out what to do next? Maybe you've read the same paragraph several times because you weren't able to focus long enough for reading comprehension to sink in, or mindlessly gone to complete a task you already completed a half-hour ago. You're clearly feeling overwhelmed or unable to concentrate, and it can happen to anyone. With a little help from some basic NLP mind-management techniques, you can get yourself back on track and on task.

Working With a Clean Slate

When we are trying to accomplish a task, it helps to start with a blank workspace. This could be anything from clearing off a table or closing all the windows on your computer to begin fresh with a new project. The same works for your brain- you can use basic neuro-linguistic programming to make your mind a clean slate and give yourself a new surface to work from.

Using NLP to clear your mind is one of the most basic and most useful practical applications of the methodology. It can take just a few minutes but can be used in nearly every real-life situation where you need to find clarity and begin a new task, whether that is handling a difficult project at work or dealing with an emotional, interpersonal relationship.

Whatever you are trying to accomplish, you can get a fresh start through *visualization.* This fundamental NLP principle, along with modeling, will be the

basis on which all other NLP methods are built. Visualization means that you mentally picture things (use your imagination) in order to bring them to fruition.

Using visualization to clear your mind can be as simple as it sounds. Remember, when you use NLP, you are using your brain to change your internal monologue to change your behavior. Take a moment, close your eyes, and assess your current thoughts. If they are jumbled, you may have a hard time concentrating. Now think about something that evokes organization. Try picturing a table covered in items (your thoughts), and a filing cabinet or a bookshelf, and begin to mentally put your thoughts away. Picture yourself removing items from the table and placing them on the shelf or filing them in the cabinet.

Maybe you're more technologically inclined. You could visualize your thoughts as tabs open on a computer, and imagine yourself closing the tabs and putting items into folders. There are many ways to imagine a scenario where you sort and store the thoughts that have you overwhelmed or overstimulated. NLP is, as we mentioned earlier, a self-practice, and so you can visualize something that is personal to you and that you can use as motivation.

Once you've visualized a clear table or a neat computer desktop, or whatever it is that you've pictured as cleaning up your mental space, take a moment to snap a mental photo. Think about how that tidy space makes you feel and capture that emotion. Now open your eyes, and make it a reality. Use your mental image as a guide to your behavior- you'll be pleasantly surprised at how much focus you've given yourself just be giving your brain a chance to calm down, straighten up its thoughts, and see just how nice it feels to be uncluttered.

Congratulations! You've just completed your first true NLP exercise. Mastering visualization takes practice, but the more you do it, the easier it will become.

Why Visualization (and all of NLP) Works

Now that you've used some very basic NLP visualization, you may be wondering exactly why it works. Let's break down the specific components of NLP to give you a greater understanding of the methodology moving forward.

“N,” of course, stands for “neuro,” which is the prefix used to refer to the brain. Your brain is made up of specialized cells, known as neurons, which are the body’s sensory cells. The neurons in your brain all have a job to do, but they must work together for the brain to function as a whole. The cells in your frontal lobes and the cells in your cerebellum are similar in form but perform very different functions.

NLP seeks to affect the parts of the brain, which process language, memory, and voluntary behavior. When you use your brain in a certain way, your neural pathways form and develop to mold to those ways of thinking. When you begin to learn a new skill, new neural pathways begin to form. NLP works to change your neural pathways and create new behaviors.

The “L” in NLP stands for “linguistic,” referring to language. Everyone has an internal monologue unique to them. This is your self-talk. It can be positive, negative, or neutral, often fluctuating over the course of the day. This is the voice we use to remind ourselves of why we walked into a room, or think about what we need to do next.

This is also the voice we use to determine how we act and how we feel about ourselves. Do you praise yourself or criticize yourself more often? Do you call yourself derogatory things? One of the purposes of NLP is to change the language of your internal monologue to affect positivity, set goals, and ultimately change your behavior.

That leaves the “P,” which stands for programming. We often think of programming in terms of computer science, but the human brain is really just a biological computer. In this way, the neurons are the hardware of the brain, and your internal language is the software. When you combine these to tell the computer what function to complete, you get the programming- the output. Using this analogy is a good way to grasp the full picture of NLP. When you use the correct hardware and software, you get the proper function; the computer puts out the behavior that you wanted to achieve. This is the action that NLP can perform for your life.

This is why visualization works as a basic function of neuro-linguistic programming. Visualization takes you from where you are to where you want to be by using a very simple principle; that if you can see it, you can do it. When you do a visualization, it requires very little effort but can yield a big result. You can work your way through a problem, sort out a messy room, and set goals, both big and small, just by closing your eyes and picturing it.

Visualization forces you to open new neural pathways by imagining yourself doing an activity you may not have attempted before or imagined a different way to do it. When you do this, you are speaking to yourself in a new context and with new terms. Once those neural pathways begin to form and you embrace the new language attached to them, then you will begin to exhibit new behaviors as a result. You have started to re-program your brain.

Another important facet of visualization is being able to see things as you would complete them or as others would. This is called *association* and *dissociation*. In our previous example of having to take over a work presentation for an injured colleague, you visualized doing things your way (association), and you visualized watching your colleague do them (dissociation). It helps to think of this as being an actor on stage playing out a part, or an audience member watching the performance.

Now that you've learned the basics of why and how NLP works let's take a look at the other basic method from which we'll base all other exercises, and that method is modeling. We mentioned modeling in the negative stimuli example used in Chapter 1 when we talked about how you could hypothetically replace an injured coworker in an important business meeting. Let's take a closer look.

Basic Modeling for Mind Management

When we talk about modeling in regard to neuro-linguistic programming, we don't mean it in the sense of showing off new products or fashions. In NLP, modeling refers to the practice of observing a method or person that is successful and then reprogramming the brain to achieve the same results. While everyone

has their own stories and their own lives, modeling can help you see where you are, where you want to be, and decide the best way to get there by emulating people who have already achieved what you would like to achieve.

Children often display modeling behaviors, although they don't know that's what they are doing. Toddlers mimic the actions of their parents and caregivers, which is why it's important for adults to mind their behaviors around little ones. Older children will copy the batting stance of their favorite baseball player or shoot free throws like their favorite basketball player. Children memorize scenes from their favorite movies and sing songs like a musician they admire. This is external modeling, and everyone has done it at some point in their lives.

With NLP, we are talking about a more internal form of modeling, one that you can use to set and achieve goals, change your behaviors, and find success in your endeavors. If you'd like to be an actor or an author, chances are good that you have people in that field that you admire. Perhaps you like their performance or writing style, or you have a commonality such as ethnicity or geolocation that you can relate to. You've probably studied up on this person, having read articles or biographies about them. In the 21st century, you even have the option to follow the daily life of celebrities through social media like Twitter or Instagram.

Chances are, you probably know a lot about a person you admire in the field in which you'd like to succeed. Here's where modeling comes in. Think about why that person is successful and how they achieved that success. Using your visualization techniques, you can model your thoughts and mental language after that of those whose success you admire, thereby directing your behavior to be more like theirs. This isn't to say that if you'd like to star in fast-paced action movies, you'll become Jason Statham overnight. But by examining the behaviors of your favorite actors, you can visualize your way to a plan to achieve their same success.

Now, this is a lofty modeling goal, and we'll certainly delve into intensive modeling techniques later on. For now, let's start your modeling exercises with something more fundamental. We'll go back to the example of your hypothetical

coworker. You've gotten over the initial shock of realizing that John's been hurt, and while he'll recover from his injuries, it's now up to you to deliver his major business presentation.

What's your first step? Physically, you'll want to procure his presentation materials. This is probably as easy as looking in his office and collecting his charts and graphs. You probably also have any digitized materials on a shared drive in the office. Mentally, you need to prepare yourself to deliver the presentation with as much knowledge and precision as John would have done himself. Here's where modeling comes into play.

Think about why John was chosen for this task. Was it based on seniority, his demeanor, or his expertise? It's probably a combination of the three, with some other factors thrown in. You'll want to give thought about why John is successful in these types of meetings, including his style of delivery. Is he open and affable, or dry and businesslike? Does he field questions in a manner that's pleasing to clients?

When you've answered these questions for yourself, now it's time to model. Take a few minutes to close your eyes and picture John giving the presentation. Observe his mannerisms and attitude. Once you've got a solid image, begin to imagine yourself in John's place. Picture yourself giving the presentation and answering questions. Picture shaking the clients' hands and sealing the deal.

This visualization will give you something on which to base your behavior when it's time to deliver the presentation. By putting yourself in John's shoes and modeling his behavior, you can be just as successful as he would have been, had he attended the meeting himself. Congratulations on your imaginary business deal!

You can practice modeling in your everyday life by observing the people around you. If you have a friend that's very organized, and you'd like to be more organized, you can model her behavior to help your own organizational skills. If your sister is a wonderful cook, sit around her kitchen and watch her work. You

can model your way into being a better cook yourself.

You can apply modeling to mind management by practicing it frequently. When you use visualization and modeling, you are continuously opening those new neural pathways we've been talking about. As you make new neurological connections, you will also begin to change the way you talk to yourself, and your behaviors will follow. Modeling and visualization will be the basis of every other NLP application discussed in this book.

Using NLP for Sorting and Storage

Another wonderful mind management application of neuro-linguistic programming is compartmentalization. You can use NLP to sort, prioritize, and set aside thoughts or tasks into mental compartments to be retrieved or discarded. Remember the clean-slate visualization exercise? You'll be going one step further with it here to tidy up your mind and put things away for later.

When you visualized clearing your mental space, where did you put the mess? Did you mentally shove it in the drawers of a filing cabinet, or did you stack it neatly on shelves? What you do with your mental clutter can affect how you recall things later on. It's important to be able to use visualization to organize your thoughts for not only now but in the future. Being able to compartmentalize, prioritize, and memorize is a great tool for staying mentally and physically organized at home, work, and school.

To use NLP visualization for sorting and prioritizing your thoughts, you can open your NLP experience the same way you did in the mind-clearing exercise, by visualizing your messy mental space just as you did before. Let all your jumbled thoughts and ideas become manifested in your mind. Now you can begin to visualize putting your thoughts away to clear your mind, but this time, you'll need to concentrate on where and how you are storing your thoughts.

As if you are organizing a closet, you'll want to put things you need more frequently in a more accessible place. Put these ideas and concepts at 'eye level' in your mental storage unit, and take time to talk to yourself about these items.

Internally say, “I need to think about this for my work project. I’ll leave this right here.”

For thoughts and concepts you need, but not right away, talk to yourself about that as well. Say, “This is an event happening in two weeks. I’ll file that here so I can get to it soon.” Commit your visualized shelving to memory. Do this with each and every thought that is clouding your mind. You can even visualize yourself writing a list of where you’ve put things in your visualized storage space.

If your thoughts are jumbled up with memories, you can sort those out too. Make yourself some mental memory boxes, and think about each memory as you store it. If the memory was a good one, think about how it made you feel and where you are storing it. You can recall that experience with more ease later if you remember exactly where you’ve stored it. For unpleasant memories, remind yourself what lesson was to be learned and how you felt, then commit the memory to a box and shelve it in the back of your brain. Then you can recall the lesson and the feelings without dredging out the full painful memory.

Using the power of NLP to utilize your brain as an efficient storage space can help you be more organized, be more in touch with your memories and skills, and help you work through mental clutter with calm and consistency. When you visualize being organized and speak to yourself about where you are putting your thoughts and memories, you are giving yourself the fuel and the tools to become more organized in the external world. You’re also teaching yourself what you see as important, and this is a really crucial step in becoming more adept at NLP and using it for many other applications. When you understand what you, internally, see as priorities in your life, you’ll be able to better stay organized, make necessary changes, and set goals for the short- and long-term.

What you’ve set aside to get to at a later time and what you’ve set aside as memories can also teach you a lot about your priorities. When you compartmentalize and store certain thoughts and concepts, you’ve given yourself the tools to only pay attention to what’s currently the most pressing issue or

project on your mental plate. It's important to remember that compartmentalizing something doesn't mean you don't care about that item; it simply means you know that it needs to be set aside for another time.

Reviewing the NLP Basics

Now that you've learned the two fundamental exercises of NLP let's briefly review before we move on to more in-depth applications.

Visualization:

- a basic NLP practice which employs imagination

- teaches you to picture things that you want to make happen

- utilizes internal monologue to imagine and encourage new behaviors

Modeling:

- a basic NLP practice which employs observation

- teaches you to see things as others see them

- encourages successful behaviors

When you practice the basic exercises of visualization and modeling, you will begin to become more and more adept at them. In the next chapters, we'll build upon these fundamentals to begin exploring how you can use NLP to realize and improve your self-concept, your relationships, and your communication skills.

UNDERSTANDING AND INCREASING YOUR SELF-CONCEPT

IT'S time to talk about *beliefs*, which are another strong underlying principle of neuro-linguistic programming. What you believe and what you value plays a vital role in how you see the world, and more importantly, how you see yourself. Let's first take a look at the basics of belief and how they apply to NLP.

What Are Beliefs?

This is a loaded question, and everyone will answer it differently. Belief is a very personal thing, and it affects every aspect of life. Beliefs can be simple or grandiose, but no matter the scope, they are the building blocks of our views on the world.

When you think about beliefs, your brain probably automatically jumps to religion or politics. The truth is, belief lies in things much smaller than that. Belief lies in what we see in the mirror each morning. Belief lies in the people we share our lives with, and belief lies within your own mind, every single second of every day.

Belief is defined as "the acceptance that something is true or exists; faith, trust, or confidence that something is real; a firmly held conviction or opinion." How does that apply to you? Are you a person that can define themselves by their beliefs? If you are not, how can you go about finding and identifying your beliefs? And if you do identify yourself by your beliefs, are they accurate? If not, how can you change them?

These are the questions we'll begin to tackle in this chapter, and we'll be looking at identifying your *self-concept*, defining your beliefs, and learning how to adjust your self-image through the use of NLP. Let's get started!

What Do You Believe?

It's time for some self-reflection, and if you're a person who likes to put pen to paper and make lists, you may want to get a notebook. We're going to look ask a lot of questions, and writing down the answers may help you get a better picture of your own beliefs.

First, you'll be asked to examine what you believe about yourself. This is what will help you understand your self-concept, which is the main focus of this chapter. We'll also be asking some questions about your beliefs about the world, which we'll use to build upon your NLP skills in later chapters when we talk about relationships and communication. Time to put your thinking cap on!

Try to answer the following questions:

*Do you like your physical appearance?

- If yes, why?

-Try to think about what parts of your appearance that you like. You can focus on the big things- "I like being tall"- or the very small things – "I like the way my earlobes attach to my head"- but think of some positive attributes that you BELIEVE you possess.

- If no, why not?

-Try and be honest, but don't eviscerate yourself. If you carry an unhealthy amount of extra weight, be honest- "I should probably lose a few pounds"- but not brutal- "I'm so fat!"- because this exercise is not about making yourself feel bad!

- If you would like to change your physical appearance, do you believe that you can? If so, how?

*Do you like your personality?

- If yes, why?

- Do you believe yourself to be a ‘good’ person? In your mind, what qualities constitute that of a good person? Do you believe that other people like you? If so, what is it about your personality that they find attractive?

- If no, why not?

- Do you believe yourself to be flawed? If so, what flaws do you think you possess? As with your physical appearance, be honest but kind to yourself. Do you have a quick temper, or a tendency to be rude? If you were to ask others to describe a flaw in your personality, what do you think they would say?

*Do you speak to yourself in positive terms or negative terms?

- What’s your inner voice?

- What tone do you use in your internal monologue? Are you upbeat with yourself, or do you berate yourself regularly? Do you find yourself downplaying your accomplishments, or do you give yourself adequate praise when you achieve something?

- Who does your inner voice sound like?

- Do you speak to yourself in your own voice and tone, or do you allow the inflection and mannerisms of others (like a parent or influential teacher) to take over your internal monologue?

*What do you believe beyond yourself?

-Are you religious or spiritual?

- Do you believe in a god or gods, or another form of higher power?

- If so, why? Is it because you were told that a god exists, or did you evolve into your faith independently? If not, why not? Do you put your faith and beliefs in

only things which are tangible?

- Do you hold firm political beliefs?

- Are you conservative, moderate, or liberal? What helped you form those beliefs? Are they inherited from your parents, or did you form your political views on your own?

- Do you believe that people who hold opposing political beliefs are inherently wrong, or are you willing to have discourse? Have you ever changed your political viewpoint after learning of contrasting ideologies through research or conversation?

* Do you believe that other people are generally good or generally bad?

- If you believe that people are good, why? Is it because you are an optimist and choose to see the good in people?

- If you believe that people are bad, why? Is it based on general observation, or are you basing your distrust on personal experience?

* Do you believe that people can enact change through peaceful means, without the need for conflict?

- Do you see yourself as a good communicator?

-If so, what qualities do you possess that make you a good communicator?

-If not, what qualities do you think you need to improve upon to be more effective at communication?

* What are your *values*?

- What are the qualities that you strive to incorporate into your everyday life?

- Do you value family and friends? Loyalty and integrity? Money and material possessions? Are you a person who is driven by ambition and competition?

- How do you incorporate your values into your life? Do you find yourself struggling to match your values to your lifestyle?

- Are you happy with your values, or do you think that you may have outgrown them as you've matured?

- Do you seek the company of others with the same values?

- Do your friends and family hold all the same values as you, or is there diversity within your inner circle?

- Do your studies or your career match your values and beliefs, or do you find it difficult to align yourself with the work you are immersed in?

*Reflecting upon all your previous answers, do you believe yourself to be generally happy with your life?

- If so, why? Think about all the facets of your life that bring you joy, big or small.

- If not, what aspects of your life do you find bring you the most unhappiness? Do you think that there are ways to change those things?

These questions were designed to get you thinking, and they should have varied in difficulty to answer. The sum total of your answers will give you an accurate picture of who you are- what personality traits you possess, either good or bad, what you seek from other people, and how you see the world around you. This is your self-concept, and within it, you will find all the elements of your self-esteem, your beliefs, and your values.

Using NLP to Improve Your Self-Concept

Once you've answered all the questions above, it's time to tie it all together. Do you think you came out on the positive side or negative side of your self-concept? And even if you think you fared well, do you think there are still areas of your self-concept which you can improve?

Let’s use a basic example to show how you can use NLP to work on your self-concept. Perhaps you identified that you think that having a bad temper is one of your flaws. Using neuro-linguistic programming, you can teach yourself to be a more patient person, one who is less likely to lose their temper.

If you believe that you are too quick to anger, chances are very good that you know what it is that triggers your temper. Even admitting that you may have a bad temper is a small step towards finding a solution through NLP, because you have identified that temper as part of your self-concept.

When it comes to improving your self-concept through NLP, there are a couple of different ways you can approach changing a type of behavior that you think reflects negatively upon you. If you are trying to ‘fix’ a quick temper, you can do so either through modeling or visualization.

If you were to use modeling to change yourself from someone who has a quick temper to be someone who exhibits a great deal of patience, then it would behoove you to try to model someone who does not have a short fuse. Do you have a friend or relative whose patience you admire? Is there someone you work with whom you look to for diffusing tense situations?

If you can choose someone whose patience you’d like to use as a model, observe them, especially when they are handling a problem that would normally be a trigger for your temper. Do they use verbal or non-verbal cues to keep their calm? Can they stay patient in the face of difficult people? If you are close enough to that person, you may be able to ask them quite frankly, how they keep their cool under pressure that would have you steaming.

Once you’ve gathered enough observations, it’s time to begin modeling. Set aside time for a proper NLP session. Closing your eyes, think about a situation that would make you angry; perhaps it’s an irate customer at work or something your children do often that gets on your nerves. Picture yourself dealing with that situation the way you normally would. You’re probably feeling a little internal twinge of frustration at this mental image, not only because imagining

things that make you angry can make you feel angry but because you can probably see that your ill-tempered solution was not the best response.

Now picture that same scenario, but imagine that the person you are trying to model is the one dealing with the situation. Picture them handling the scenario with patience and aplomb. Think carefully about what type of language and tone they are using, and picture what their body language would look like.

You're going to now imagine yourself in the situation again, but this time, you are the one keeping your cool. Use the language that the person you are trying to model would use and be mindful of your body language. Watch the scenario play out as you would like to be able to handle it. Focus on how it makes you feel to be in control of your temper and your emotions. Give yourself an internal reminder of how you are feeling and acting- it can be a simple as a word or two, something like "stay calm." This will be a cue you can give yourself when the situation next arises in real life.

If you cannot think of anyone whose patience you'd like to model, you can still use visualization to learn to curb a quick temper. To use this method, you'll also want to begin by imagining or picturing a scenario that makes you angry. It can be a real-life situation that you think perhaps you didn't handle as well as you could have or a hypothetical scene based on things that regularly trigger your temper.

Once you've conjured a mental image of your anger scenario, break your response down into small pieces. Do you remember the Choose Your Own Adventure novels? In those books, every choice you made at the end of a page or chapter would lead you to a different outcome. You can do so with NLP visualization, by taking charge of every step of a mental transformation.

Using the scenario you've mentally created, think about your actions as you work toward not losing your temper. Choose your words and your actions very carefully and take time to compare and contrast that behavior toward the behavior you would normally exhibit. Focus on the swell of pride you feel when

you envision yourself successfully finding a solution that doesn't rely on anger.

Once you have had success in visualizing yourself performing the behavior, you aspire to perform. You can use the memory of that success the next time you are in a situation that would normally trigger your temper. Remind yourself how good NOT losing your cool felt, and speak to yourself in the same language you used in your visualization. Remember you are trying to permanently change your behavior for the better, and it may take practice, but being mindful of your thoughts and words *will* lead to a positive change over time. Although this example focused on a change in a very specific behavior, the techniques used can also be applied to other behaviors that you do not find ideal in yourself.

Let's take a look at using NPL to adjust other parts of your self-concept. Maybe when you were answering the questions at the beginning of the chapter, you found that there was something about your physical appearance that bothered you. Of course, in this modern age, there are ways to improve physical appearance through cosmetics, surgery, and other external practices. These don't, however, address the underlying cause of your unhappiness. NLP can help you look at yourself in a different way and bring you to acceptance or a satisfying solution.

If you think that a specific physical attribute causes you to have a lower self-concept, you can use NLP to change your attitude about that attribute. Remember that neuro-linguistic programming is meant to help you change your thoughts and words to change your actions. In this case, the action is to be kinder to yourself. So how can you use your NLP techniques to change your belief about yourself?

We'll use visualization first. Think about what it is that you don't like about your appearance. Imagine looking in a mirror and focus on that attribute. What is it? Your height? Think your nose is a little weird? The truth is, most people have something about themselves that they just don't like. Feeling self-conscious about your appearance can affect the way you carry yourself and how you interact with others.

When you're visualizing your disliked feature, concentrate on the language you use to describe it. Let's say, simply for the sake of example, that it's your nose that bothers you. Why? Think about the language you would normally use as if you were describing your nose to a stranger. It's probably not very complimentary.

Now, think about synonyms for your adjectives, but ones that have a more positive spin. Don't think of your nose as 'too long,' think of it as 'aquiline,' a term which refers to the Latin for 'eagle-like.' An eagle has majestic qualities, does it not? When you are trying to improve your self-concept, language is the key factor in NLP. You want to change the language which you use to talk to yourself and about yourself.

Getting back to the visualization exercise, imagine yourself in the mirror again. Use your new language, and picture yourself standing taller as your self-esteem goes up and your self-consciousness goes down. Take in your aquiline nose and behold its power. It's regal, isn't it? The takeaway from this NLP exercise should be that every time you see your reflection and begin to criticize your nose, you should stand up straight and remind yourself of your new language. It will become second nature to do so, and eventually, you will no longer need the reminder. You will have changed your behavior, and your self-concept, permanently.

You can also use NLP to help you problem-solve something that you consider to be a flaw in your physical appearance. You can certainly apply modeling here if you like. Perhaps there is a person in your life who looks the way you wish to look or has a physique you'd like to attain. You can observe what sort of beauty or styling routine that they use, or what workout regimen that they hold to, and you can model that behavior.

You can also use visualization to think about new hairstyles or colors, new clothing styles, tattoos or makeup, or anything else you might want to change about your appearance. When you become adept at NLP visualization, you can use it to imagine just about anything without spending time, money, or emotional

value on things that don’t make you happy.

That’s one of the beautiful things about neuro-linguistic programming- you can use it to be anyone you want to be, set goals for anything you want to do, and employ it to take you anywhere you want to go. Let’s go over one last example of improving your self-concept through NLP, this one focusing on changing the way you think other people perceive you. This exercise will be a great way to build up to the topics in the next few chapters, where we’ll discuss how to use NLP to connect to, communicate with, and influence others.

In this exercise, you’ll be thinking about your answers to the earlier question about how you think others see you. Did you answer in a positive or a negative way? There’s another way to approach this topic, which is effective even if a bit morbid. If you were to die tomorrow, what would people say at your funeral? That’s a thought that almost everyone has had from time to time. If you don’t think they would say nice things, why? Is it because you don’t deserve it, or because you don’t *believe* you deserve it?

When you don’t have high self-esteem or a strong self-concept, you may think that others don’t like you, but you’re probably wrong. It’s difficult to pinpoint exactly how people feel about you when you’re feeling down on yourself, and conditions like anxiety and depression can play a role in keeping you from recognizing that others may like you more than you like yourself.

When you answered the earlier questions about liking your personality and how others think about you, you were forced to think about the parts that make up the whole that is you, and anyone would be hard-pressed to not find something they don’t like. No one is perfect, and everyone has something they can improve upon. Regardless of why you may think that people do not have a high opinion of you, NLP can help you see yourself in a more positive light and help you change any negative quality which you think might be holding you back from building a better *rapport* with others.

We’ll start with a visualization exercise to help you improve your self-esteem

through imagery and an adjustment in language. Close your eyes and relax. The first thing you're going to visualize is yourself, looking in a full-length mirror. Think about the way you see yourself, beyond your physical appearance or a small personality flaw. This is an exercise in finding your true sense of self-worth or self-esteem.

Then try visualizing your feelings about yourself as words. You can picture them floating through the air, and as they do, imagine yourself grabbing and catching the positive words and letting the negative words fall to the ground, where they shatter. The idea is to visualize yourself getting rid of any negative thoughts and only keeping the positive. Whenever you start to feel down, you can picture the scene, again and again, to remind yourself that you never need to feel those negative self-thoughts.

Because NLP is so personal, you can visualize demolishing your negative self-thoughts any way you'd like. You can imagine a batting cage, and picture yourself hit your negative feelings away. Put on a pair of imaginary boots and stomp the things that don't make you feel good about yourself. The point is whatever it takes for you to obliterate your negative feelings is acceptable. Make it memorable and make it yours.

NLP and Your State of Mind

One of the biggest concepts in neuro-linguistic programming is that of using NLP to effect change, and what bigger internal change is there than adjusting your state of mind? You'll frequently hear or see the term '*state*' in regard to NLP, and what this refers to is your mood, attitude, or state of mind. In other words, your mental and emotional status.

Your mental state can be permanently attached to your self-concept, but most people, no matter their base state, will experience a range of mental states, from happy to sad, to angry or complacent. You can use NLP to change your mental state by changing your internal language. When you're in a terrible mood, feeling low or defeated, you can visualize your way back into a better mood by

changing the words your brain is using.

Try to use a similar visualization to the one you used when trying to boost your self-esteem. Take time to think about the words you're using to describe your day, and imagine yourself stomping out the negativity. Use positive words to build yourself back up. Picture doing something that makes you happy or calm, or visualize yourself being with someone you love. Imagine what they would say to make you feel better.

Remember that your state of mind is all about perception. You are feeling the way you feel because of your perception of the world around you. You can use NLP to change your perceptions and your beliefs for the betterment of your mental state. When you learn to change your state of mind, it becomes easier to maintain a stronger self-concept and a happier lifestyle.

Now that you've discovered ways to use NLP to boost your self-concept by creating visualizations to rid yourself of your negative feelings and negative states of mind let's move on. It's time to take a look at how your feelings about yourself and how you think others feel about you play into the way you connect and communicate with others.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

WHILE NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING is an extremely useful methodology for discovering and improving yourself, it also has many applications in getting to know and connect with other people. One important aspect of this is knowing what type of communicator you are. This ties directly into your personality. Some people are extroverted and feel comfortable starting conversations with strangers. Some people are more introverted and don't feel as capable of initiating contact.

How you see yourself can have a strong impact on what type of communicator you are. In this chapter, we'll explore the relationship between your self-concept and your *communication style*, how you can use NLP to strengthen your communication skills, and you'll learn the basics of mirroring and *matching*.

What's Your Communication Style?

Most communications experts agree that there are four main modes or styles of communication- passive, passive-aggressive, assertive, and aggressive. These styles describe how people use language and tone to interact with others. It also has a direct correlation with how you communicate with yourself internally.

When you are able to identify your communication style, you'll be better equipped to manage your interpersonal relationships, recognize when a situation calls for a different mode of communication, and handle your internal monologue. Let's take a look at the various styles of communication and how

they can affect your daily interactions with yourself and others.

People who are *passive communicators* are those who choose not to stand up for themselves or be confrontational. Passive communicators may walk away from situations to avoid conflict, even if it means that they end up being treated unfairly or come out on the losing end of a situation.

Passive communicators may use that style of communication because they feel they aren't worthy of protecting their own feelings and rights; they may suffer from anxiety or be plagued by low self-esteem. It's often difficult for a passive communicator to express their feelings and therefore choose to suppress or avoid their emotions.

Because passive communicators can't or choose not to express their feelings and their wants and needs, they may feel as if they are doormats- everyone around them gets to do or feel however they want, with little regard for the passive communicator. This may be a perception or a manifest reality but can have a negative effect on self-esteem, self-concept, and feelings of worth.

In addition, passive communicators also feel a sense of lack of control, confusion, and resentment because they cannot express emotion in a healthy manner. This can lead to worsening or spiraling of anxiety or depression, due to a sense of 'invisibility' and the world passing them by without stopping to check in on them. They can also exhibit a lack of emotional maturity. People who are passive communicators may also exhibit poor non-verbal body language, often having poor posture or being unable to maintain eye contact.

People who are *aggressive communicators* are almost completely diametrically opposed to those who are passive. Aggressive communicators are outspoken and brash about their wants and needs, regardless of the feeling of those around them. People who use aggressive communication exhibit body language, which implies intimidation- actions like puffing out their chests and standing almost 'too straight' to show that they are bigger.

Aggressive communicators are not afraid to talk about themselves, often loudly

and without any semblance of pretense. While this type of communication is rarely dishonest, it is also disruptive and can be upsetting to others. When people communicate in an aggressive style, it sends the message that their own desires are their only concern. Aggressive communicators can cause others to fear and avoid them because their aggressiveness is off-putting, especially to passive communicators.

Aggressive communicators also tend to exhibit other personality traits that are commonly perceived as negative, including selfishness and tardiness. They also tend to (loudly) blame their shortcomings on others. In truth, while aggressive communicators can be exactly as they are seen by the outside world, many are actually quite insecure or have low self-esteem. Their aggressive manner of communicating is used to mask internal turmoil and poor self-concept. Often, this will manifest as a short temper or impetuous behavior.

It can be difficult for people to communicate in turn with those who are aggressive communicators. Because it can be hard to approach an aggressive communicator, the conversation often gets precluded, and key information can be lost. Once you've engaged with an aggressive communicator, they tend to dominate the conversation, not letting others get a word in edgewise. Those who communicate aggressively can come across as bullying or strong-arming others out of a conversation.

People who are *passive-aggressive communicators* choose to express themselves with what often comes across as mixed messages. A passive-aggressive communicator will use nuance, tone, and word selection to convey their wants and needs in a way that seems passive, but is really aggressive. For example, a passive-aggressive coworker may want lunch from a certain restaurant, but everyone else votes for takeout from a different place. The passive-aggressive communicator may then say things like, "No, it's fine, I just won't eat today. No big deal."

The words by themselves are harmless and passive. Your colleague is saying, "It's cool. I'm not crazy about that place, so I'll just wait and eat dinner later."

It’s the tone used that is the hallmark of passive-aggression. What your coworker really means is, “I wanted what I wanted, and since I didn’t get my way, I’m going to try to make you all feel guilty that I’m starving to death over here.” They may even go so far as to bring up how hungry they are over the rest of the day, implying that it’s everyone else’s fault that they didn’t have lunch.

Everyone has had a passive-aggressive moment in their lives, but that doesn’t mean you are a passive-aggressive communicator all the time. Teenagers are masters of passive-aggression, and this is because they are still working out how to convey maturing emotions in a positive, productive manner. The problem comes when adults haven’t gotten past this phase in emotional development and become permanent passive-aggressive communicators.

It can be frustrating to speak with or regularly deal with passive-aggression from others. While it’s not as intimidating as interacting with an aggressive communicator, it can be difficult to separate words from meaning and have to constantly be on your guard against an emotional assault. Dealing with passive-aggressive communicators can be like walking on eggshells, wondering what sort of guilt trip will be coming next.

People who are *assertive communicators* are well-balanced in their communications. Think of the communication styles as a triangle, with the point facing down. At the top left is passive communication, and at the top right is aggressive communication. Connecting them down below is passive-aggressive. But if you travel along the top line between passive and aggressive, you’ll find a center point which you can mark as assertive.

Assertive communicators are honest about sharing their feelings, but are cognizant of the needs and wants of others. Assertive communicators take care to listen as well as speak, and they do not begrudge other people their desires. People who communicate assertively often exhibit three positive traits, known as the three Cs: confidence, clarity, and control.

Because assertive communicators have good control of their emotions, they are

able to express themselves in a clear, confident manner. Confidence is additionally conveyed through good posture and eye contact. Clarity is defined by the ability to say what you mean and mean what you say without overcomplicating your words or fumbling through mixed emotions. This circles back to control- which can be expressed by using a measured tone and not letting emotions override your words and your actions.

Being an assertive communicator doesn't mean that you're not allowed to feel a wide range of emotions, but it does mean that you are able to process those emotions to a point where you feel comfortable expressing them in a healthy manner. When you can do this consistently, people will be comfortable trusting you with their own emotions, and you'll also become a better listener.

Assertive communication has other advantages as well. If you are a person who rarely loses their cool or never gets worked up, people are more likely to sit up and take notice when you say that something is cause for alarm. People who are assertive communicators are also not shy about setting boundaries and, therefore, are less likely to feel like they are being taken advantage of. They take responsibility for their actions and give credit to and lay blame on others gracefully.

It's time to ask yourself:

- Now that you've learned about the communication styles, which are you?

- Are you solidly one type, or do you think you are a mix?

- Do you waver between all four styles depending on the situation?

- If you honestly find yourself to be a passive person, what do you think you can do to improve your communication skills?

- If you believe yourself to be an aggressive communicator, what do you think you can do to find a more agreeable style of communication?

- If you think you exhibit passive-aggressive tendencies, how can you work on

being able to express yourself more openly?

- If you are already an assertive communicator, what do you think you can do to maintain this communication style?

Once you've thought about these questions and comfortably identified your primary communication style, it's time to take a look at how NLP can help you improve your communication skills for better interpersonal relationships, more effective work interactions, and easier introductions when meeting new people.

Using NLP for Better Communication

Neuro-linguistic programming is a beneficial way to make a conscious effort to improve your communication skills. You can use NLP to learn to control your emotions, find ways to process difficult or awkward social situations, and find ways to speak your mind and set boundaries in an effective and positive manner.

To use NLP to improve communication, it helps to be able to identify what you'd like to change or strengthen concerning your communication style. You can use the visualization and modeling techniques that you've learned so far to attain your communication goals and become a better speaker, listener, and conveyor of emotions. Once you've learned to adjust or fortify your communication style through NLP, we'll also take a look at another technique called *anchoring,* where you'll learn to give yourself instant emotional recall by attaching feelings to visualizations. Let's get started! We'll work with some visualization first.

If you are a passive communicator, you'll need to find ways to make yourself more assertive. But what if you're a shy person, or you have a low self-concept? It's important, to be honest with yourself and decide why you are a passive communicator. If you have a definitive reason, such as being deterred from speaking or expressing emotion as a child, you can use visualization to work on becoming a stronger, more confident communicator.

You'll need to use the same sort of visualization that you used when we were

working on self-concept exercises. Those exercises are designed to improve your confidence and self-image. You'll want to conjure up imagery of you in a situation that you usually find problematic. Perhaps you have a colleague with whom you have difficulty communicating. Maybe they are aggressive or intimidating.

First, visualize yourself handling your colleague like you normally do. Maybe you shy away from conversing with this coworker or let them take advantage of you. Now imagine standing up for yourself against this coworker. Concentrate on the language that you are using. Concentrate on how it makes you feel to not be pushed around. Picture yourself confidently standing straighter and taller.

When you're done with your visualization, keep the picture in the back of your mind. The next time you have to interact with that particular colleague, recall that memory. This is your first basic anchoring experience, and you'll be great! Stand up tall, use respectful but firm language, and don't let your abrasive coworker get the best of you. Once you've done it a few times, it will become easier to be assertive, and your coworker will likely back off, matching your tone.

You can also use modeling to improve your confidence and control. Think about someone whose confidence you admire. You can use the modeling techniques you learned in Chapter 3 to observe and emulate their communication style. Confident people do not demand respect but are given it through their actions, especially how they interact with others. If you have someone in your life that you'd like to model for the way they handle the 3 Cs of assertive communication, take the time to truly observe them.

When you're scrutinizing someone else's communication skills, listen to their words, and watch their actions. Verbal and non-verbal language is often intertwined, and assertive communicators are very adept at integrating all the moving parts of effective communication skills. Assertive communicators, as noted above, are also very good listeners, so if you want to improve your passive communication skills, you'll also need to adapt to become a more attentive

listener.

Use your NLP techniques to model the behavior of the person whose skills you'd like to emulate. Picture yourself handling a situation as you would, and then insert them into the same scenario. Now, imagine yourself acting out the situation as they would, putting yourself into their shoes. Think about the language they would use and think about the tone they would use as well. Mull that language over in your mind until you feel comfortable with it, and commit it to memory.

When we talk about more confident language, this means removing filler phrases that would denote uncertainty or lack of confidence. For example, if you know something, don't say you 'think' you know, just say you know, like this:

With filler: "I think the client likes the set-up."

With confidence: "The client likes the set-up."

With filler: "I'm pretty sure that meeting went well."

With confidence: "That meeting went well."

You can also try to remove filler words and phrases when you're speaking with friends and loved ones:

With filler: "Well, I'd like to go to that party."

With confidence: "I'm going to that party."

When you use language that implies that you're uncertain, people will believe that you are uncertain. Being able to remove filler words from your vocabulary shows that you are confident in what you think and believe. When you frequently answer 'yes or no' questions with ambiguity, your colleagues and friends will start to believe that you are either incapable of making decisions or

that you are trying to find excuses to not spend time with them. Other filler phrases that are common are ‘might,’ ‘but,’ ‘maybe,’ and ‘try.’ Combined with your tone, these often reflect that you are not actually going to act on the matter at hand.

When you are choosing a communicator to model, make sure you are modeling someone who uses clear, concise language without filler phrases. Take time to observe how they structure their sentences and conduct themselves during conversations. Look to people in public life that you consider to be open, assertive communicators- people like business and community leaders. People who are effective at communications also tend to make good leaders because they can convey their messages clearly. When we get to Chapter 6, we’ll have a deep look at effective communication for any situation, but for now, let’s have an overview of another upcoming in-depth topic, that of non-verbal communication.

The Importance of Non-Verbal Communication

Remember when you were a teenager, and your mother would ask you to stop your leisure activity and do a chore? You’d sigh and pause your video game, and stomp-shuffle down the stairs and take out your annoyance by slamming the dishes around just a little too hard while you were washing them, your shoulders slumped and your face in a scowl. Maybe your mother would not-so-gently suggest you needed an ‘attitude adjustment.’ But you haven’t said a word, so how does she know you’re upset?

Two words: Body language. Sometimes, the way we carry ourselves can have a far greater impact than our words. Humans are blessed with a wide range of facial expressions and the ability to gesture. We also have a complex, upright, bipedal body which is capable of a variety of postures and stances. Some experts suggest that we use non-verbal cues for up to fifty-five percent of our communications. Let’s take a look at some of the most common non-verbal cues; being able to recognize these signals will help you later on when we discuss more in-depth communication skills in Chapters 5 and 6.

Facial expressions are the first non-verbal cues that humans learn to recognize and utilize. Infants learn to mimic the facial expressions of their caregivers and take signals from what they see. Very young babies can differentiate between a smile and a frown to determine how the people around them are feeling. As we age, we learn to use and read more nuanced facial expressions, such as a furrowed brow signaling concentration or a grimace indicating pain.

We begin to internalize the facial expressions of those that we are closest to and recognize their mood or state of mind without needing to ask or waiting for an explanation. We know what the smile of a loved one means, or when a friend is angry or sad. This is because the human brain is wired to pick up visual cues from the faces of others, and the more familiar you are with someone, the more familiar you will also become with their facial expressions.

Reading facial expressions goes beyond our inner circle, though. There are universal expressions, such as a smile, which can help us relate to strangers or open up to new acquaintances. If you were traveling alone in a foreign country and needed some assistance, you would be more likely to approach someone who is smiling than someone who is scowling or frowning. We also universally relate to tears of sadness or grief because those are emotions that everyone experiences.

Being able to read facial expressions and pick up the cues that they are sending is a key part of being a good communicator. You want to be able to respond with the proper tone and emotion in turn. When we are tone-deaf to the feelings of others, it can make for awkward, possibly hurtful interactions. By making a conscious effort to read the facial expressions of the people around you, you are already making strides towards becoming better at communication.

Observing overall body language and posture is another way we can judge how others are feeling without using words. How people hold their heads, shoulders, and arms, and how they stand can tell you a lot about a person’s state of mind and their mood. When someone is standing tall with their shoulders straight, and their head held high, you can tell right away that they are feeling confident and

proud. Slumped shoulders and a bowed head often denote that someone is feeling sad or defeated.

Arms have their own tale to tell in the realm of body language. When someone is or sitting with their arms crossed in front of them, it’s a very good indicator that they are angry, upset, or feeling closed off from others. Arms akimbo with hands on hips is also a pretty good sign of anger or annoyance. When someone rests their elbows on their knees or on a table and clasps their hands in front of them, it’s generally a clue that they are about to talk about something on import or that they are waiting expectantly to hear the same.

Gestures vary by culture, but there are some that tend to cross boundaries. Not too many people don’t recognize a wave as a signal of greeting or needing attention, and children in every culture around the world raise their hand when they want to speak in school. Gestures can denote silence, like an index finger raised to pursed lips, or the classic movement of a hand drawn quickly and vehemently across the throat. No matter where you were in the world, if you saw two people talking, and one threw up their hands, you could sense their frustration. Gestures give us an extra layer of non-verbal cues to decipher how the people around us are feeling.

When you take the time to truly be a student of body language, you are giving yourself the tools you need to be an effective modeler and visualizer when you use your NLP exercises. You’re also strengthening your communication skills and stretching your emotional and empathic muscles, which will serve you well as we get into some more new NLP exercises. The more you observe, model, and visualize, the better you will become at both neuro-linguistic programming and communication.

Building Rapport Through Matching and Mirroring

One of the NLP concepts we’ve touched on lightly is that of matching and mirroring. These techniques can be used to connect with other people, even those that you’ve just met. Matching and mirroring are exactly what they sound

like- the mimicking of the body language of others to establish and maintain a rapport during and after a conversation.

When you are speaking with someone, eye contact is the primary way that both parties know the other is engaged in the conversation. You can subtly observe what someone is doing while they are speaking to you, and you can match their body language. This subconsciously displays to the speaker that you are on the same page as them and that you are connecting to what they are saying. This could be folding your hands in the same manner that they are, or crossing your legs in a similar fashion. This creates a sense of unity- that you are all the same.

Mirroring works similarly- except instead of completing the exact same action, you'll be moving your body as if you were the mirror image of the person speaking. If they tilt their head in a certain direction, then you would move your own head in the opposite direction. To simplify for the sake of example, if you are matching a person who tilts their head to the left, you will also tilt your head to the left. If you are mirroring, you would tilt your head to the right to form a mirror image.

The next time you are speaking with someone, try to see if you can mirror or match them without them noticing. You'll see a subtle shift in their tone and openness. You can also make the first move and see if you can get people to mirror or match you. It's truly a subconscious phenomenon, but the need to feel connected to others is a deep-seated human desire based on millennia of evolution and cerebral development.

A Basic Communications Recap

Now that you've learned the basics of communication that will aid you in your quest to be more proficient at neuro-linguistic programming let's recap what we discussed in this chapter before moving on to a more in-depth study of these concepts.

- Communication styles: Are you passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, or assertive?

- Passive communication can make you seem indecisive or unfriendly.

- Aggressive communication can make you seem intimidating and close-minded.

- Passive-aggressive communication is ineffective and often met with annoyance and derision.

- Assertive communication is positive, sets boundaries, and expresses emotional honestly, but kindly.

- Using visualization and modeling can help you improve and maintain a healthy, assertive style of communication.

- Non-verbal communication (such as facial expressions, body language, and gestures) is just as important as verbal communication.

- Studying non-verbal cues can make you a better NLP practitioner and a better communicator.

- You can use NLP matching and mirroring to build rapport with other people, especially people you've with whom you've just become acquainted.

With these concepts and basic techniques under your belt, it's time to move on and take a deeper dive into the use of NLP in communications. Next, we'll look at how understanding other people and how they feel and think can make you a better communicator, a better friend, and colleague, and strengthen your NLP skills.

UNDERSTANDING HOW OTHER PEOPLE THINK

As we discussed in Chapter 4, being able to know what type of communicator you are and being able to recognize verbal and non-verbal cues in others is a great start to being able to use NLP to relate to them. In this chapter, we'll be taking a more concentrated approach to gaining insight into the minds of the people around you and discovering ways to use that insight to connect with them in new, stronger ways.

Stop, Look, and Listen

The best way to observe someone is to do it quietly and thoughtfully. You cannot hear what someone is saying if you are talking at the same time, and you cannot take note of their movements and expressions if you are also moving. Remember that communication is as much about listening and observing as it is about talking and sharing your thoughts.

When you want to get to know someone and truly understand how they think and feel, you need to make a conscious effort to truly hear their words. Some people are naturally 'good listeners,' and some people need to force themselves to focus when others are speaking. What are the hallmarks of a good listener?

A good listener is one who makes eye contact when someone is speaking to them, signifying that they have your full attention. Another trait of being a good listener is to let people finish speaking before you speak. No one likes to be interrupted, and waiting for them to complete their thoughts shows courtesy and

respect. Good listeners should also ask questions meant to confirm or clarify what the speaker has said, to show that you were paying heed and that you understand what was said to you, or understand enough to ask thoughtful follow-up questions.

Making an effort to be a good listener can improve your relationships with your friends, coworkers, and family, and give you valuable insight into how they think and feel. When you are a good listener, you become familiar with the way the people closest to you process their emotions and what their critical thinking skills are like. The more you practice your listening skills, the easier it will be to get to know new people, as well. Being a good listener is also a trait which many people say they admire and look for in others when they are trying to make friends, find a romantic partner, and seek out new career connections.

Sympathy and Empathy

Sympathy and empathy are crucial interpersonal and communications tools. While the two concepts are similar, they are not interchangeable and have a different impact on you handle the emotions of others. Being able to listen to other people and then express sympathy and/or empathy can help you build stronger relationships and a deeper sense of rapport with the people around you.

Sympathy is from the Greek for ‘with feeling,’ and empathy is from the Greek for ‘in feeling,’ and that sums up the basic difference between the two. When you listen to the problems of another and you feel sympathetic towards them, what you are saying is that you feel bad for their sorrow or misfortune. When you say you empathize with them, that means that you can put yourself in their shoes and feel the way they are feeling. Perhaps you have been through a similar situation and remember how the emotions affected you.

Some experts place sympathy and empathy on a spectrum that begins with pity and ends with compassion, and can be explained as follows:

Pity- “I feel sorry for people who are experiencing hardship.”

Sympathy- “I’m sorry you are personally experiencing hardship.”

Empathy- “I’m sorry; I know how you feel from experiencing similar hardship.”

Compassion- “I’m sorry, and I am moved by your hardship to help you and others experiencing similar hardship.”

When you are able to relate to others who may be going through a rough time, you will gain valuable insight into how they deal with negative emotions. Observe how people carry themselves in times of trouble because it will give you an idea of what their behavior will be in good times. A person’s true personality is never so bare as when they are trying to deal with hardship, and a person who carried themselves with grace and dignity through the worst of times is surely someone you’d like to know, to be able to model and to be allied with whether you are in good times or bad.

The ability to sympathize and empathize also says a lot about you. It means that you have taken the time to listen and internalize how the people around you feel, and you’ve made an emotional investment to stick by them in tough times. If you can be open enough emotionally to be sympathetic or empathetic towards others, it means that you have the emotional maturity to become a better, more effective communicator, both with yourself and others, through NLP.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

In the last chapter, we spent a bit of time going over the basics of understanding body language and non-verbal communication. Let’s take an in-depth look at how actions can speak louder than words when you are trying to disseminate someone’s true intentions or emotions. Human brains are wired to allow a disconnect between what we say and what we do; we are also wired for deception. People are capable of using words that do not align with our body language.

An example of this might be a coworker, who is sitting slumped at her desk and clearly having a rough day. But if you go over and ask that colleague if she’s

okay, chances are good you'll be greeted with an encouraging smile and a brief, "I'm fine, thanks. Just tired."

You feel lied to, and you should, because you were. It's now up to you to determine why your coworker lied about her feelings, and what you can do to help without them asking. When people verbally express a different emotion than their body language conveys, it's often because they don't want to burden anyone else with their troubles. It's up to you to decide what to do. Observe your coworker's body language. If she appears to be more open to communication, you could try to talk to her again. If not, you could show your support and sympathy by simply getting her a fresh cup of coffee without asking, or brightening her day with a quick, funny interoffice email.

The point is, we don't always have to speak to communicate, and verbal communications are not always the best way to handle emotional situations. We feel societal pressure to never admit when something is wrong because we do not want to be seen as weak or unable to handle stress. But since we have been given the ability to portray and read emotion through body language, we need to take advantage of that gift. Sometimes a smile or a quick hug is all someone needs to turn their day around. And when you take the time to observe the people who you are with regularly, you'll always be aware of their body language, and you'll be more perceptive to any changes in it.

By being familiar with reading the body language of the people closest to you, you'll become more adept at reading the body language of strangers. Practice makes perfect. If you ride public transportation for work or school, look around you and try to get a sense of how your fellow riders are feeling. Look for slumped shoulders and crossed arms. Observe people's facial expressions. You could also do this at a crowded shopping center- sit on a bench and watch the world go by as you try to read the body language of the shoppers.

When you meet new people, in either your personal or professional life, being able to immediately pick up on their body language will serve you well in getting to know them and determining how you should communicate. Watch

their facial expressions and gestures to determine if they are upbeat and open to communication, or if they seem closed off and set on their own thoughts. You can tell a lot about how your future interactions will go by reading a person's body language upon your first meeting.

Take the time to also study your own body language. Be cognizant of how you come across to other people. Do you want to be seen as someone who is willing to be an open communicator? If so, make sure you present yourself as such. Keep your arms resting comfortably, not crossed in front of you. Try not to let your resting facial expression seem stern or unwelcoming. Practice smiling. You can use your NLP visualization skills to remind yourself of the things that make you happy, and use your basic anchoring technique to form a memory you can recall to put a smile on your face when you are feeling down.

Carry yourself with confidence, and you will attract people to you with ease. People will recognize your confidence and want to be near you because they will trust in your ability to handle yourself in a multitude of situations. That perception of confidence can make all the difference in your work and social life, drawing in people of equal and greater confidence who want to be associated with you, and giving strength and hope to those who do not have the same confidence level as you. Your body language will convey crucial information about you to the world, and by making an effort to be self-aware, you can improve your non-verbal communication and improve your relationships.

Behind Closed Doors: Understanding Public vs. Private Personas

Think about the sum total of your personality- your likes and dislikes, your hobbies and interests, your intelligence level and sense of humor, your family background, and the environment in which you grew up. Is there anyone out there that knows every tiny little detail about you? Probably not, not even a long-time romantic partner or close friend. Even people who know a great deal about you will never know everything.

Now think about the face you put to the world. Do your workmates know about your hobbies? Do your bowling league companions know much about your work? We live in a world where we all wear many hats and have to juggle many work and home commitments. Chances are good that all the people in your life haven't seen your entire hat collection. Add in the prevalence of social media, and you've got a recipe for multiple *personas*.

How we present ourselves to our friends and family and how we present ourselves at work are, and should be, different. At home, we are free to be more relaxed and open. We can express ourselves in more colorful language, wear whatever we like, and engage in activities that we choose rather than have them chosen for us. Home is the atmosphere where we can be our most genuine selves. This is our private persona.

At work, we have to maintain a level of professionalism that can mask the true nature of our personalities. You wouldn't (or shouldn't) cuss when you're delivering a presentation to a potential client. You have to dress to a certain sense of decorum, and you are often tasked with completing tasks you might not have ever chosen for yourself. How you present yourself at work and in other public settings is your public persona.

So which is the real you? The answer is both. The richness of the human experience allows us to have diverse and varied activities and personas to match each. There's no shame in needing to keep parts of your life private and away from your coworkers, and there's no rule that says you have to talk about work with your friends. Being able to have things in our lives that are for our own enjoyment without the interference of others is okay, too. If you like to paint model figurines, and you never tell another soul that you have a hobby, that's perfectly fine.

Imagine being a pop star. Decades ago, you would record some music, sell some records, and go out on tour where you were greeted with screaming fans- who all went away when the show was over. You could relax on your tour bus and move on to the next city to do it again the next day. There might never be a single

photograph published of you during your downtime. People who weren't your biggest fans might not ever even know what you look like.

Fast forward to the 21st century. If you are a pop star today, you are probably exhausted! You have no privacy, and you are expected to allow your fans into every aspect of your life. Social media accounts and sponsorship deals are the new hallmarks of success, but those verified checkmarks and endorsements come with a certain level of expectation; you would have no downtime, and you certainly are not allowed to slip out of your public persona. You stop concentrating on creating your music because you are too busy concentrating on not disappointing people.

This type of imbalance between public and private persona can affect everyone, not just rock stars. When you don't allow yourself time to be yourself, you begin to lose some facets of your personality. Have you ever had a brutal day at work, and when you get home, you just want to 'turn off'? Had too much social interaction and need to be somewhere quiet for a while? This is normal- we all need to have the freedom to have our public and private personas for our own mental health.

Being able to distinguish between a person's public and private personas is an important skill, as well. When you're only familiar with someone's public personality, you are seeing the part of them that they want you to see. To truly understand how other people think, you need to hone in on all parts of their personality. Ask them about their hobbies and interests. Listen carefully to what they say and watch their body language and facial expressions when they speak about the things they are passionate about. Being able to get a glimpse of people past their public personas is a crucial part of being able to effectively communicate with them.

Seeing Yourself Through the Eyes of Others

Earlier in this book, we talked about how you think others perceive you. Think about your answers to those questions. How do you think that others would

describe you? Do you like that description? When thinking about how you are seen by the people around you, you can use NLP to decide if you like the way others think about you.

Use your visualization and modeling skills to think about a scenario at work. It could be a regular activity or meeting. Create that work situation in your head and watch it play out from your perspective. Now, place yourself in the shoes of your coworker(s) and replay the scene in your head as if you are watching a movie. Which character are you? Do you like what you are seeing?

If the answer is no, you need to ask yourself why. Is it your communication style? Are you too passive or too aggressive? Do you lack confidence, or do you come across as rude? Try doing a similar exercise and visualize a scenario at home or in a social setting. How does your private persona stack up against your public persona? Do they both portray you accurately? If not, how can you find ways for them to better align with who you truly are, which should be a balance of all the aspects of your personality? By knowing yourself better, you can then better understand how to communicate with others.

Recapping Observation and Awareness

Before we move on to an in-depth look at using NLP for more effective communication, let's recap and make a list of the major concepts of understanding others:

- Be observant!
- Be mindful of facial expressions, gestures, and posture. This will tell you a great deal about how others think and feel.
- Be a good listener!
- Maintain eye contact, ask thoughtful questions, and don't talk out of turn.
- Be sympathetic and empathetic!
- Don't be afraid to tell people that you are feeling for them and with them.

- Be reactive to others!
- Recognize body language and react appropriately to help the people around you.
- Be cognizant that people are different in public and private!
- Realize that people have situational personas and be observant and respectful of them.
- Know yourself as others perceive you!
- Be aware of how people see you and take note of things that you feel need adjustment.

In the next chapter, we'll start putting together all your communication skills and show you how to apply neuro-linguistic programming to be an effective, confident communicator in all settings and scenarios.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

USING ALL the information you've learned about yourself and others in the last few chapters, it's time to get down to serious communications work. When you utilize neuro-linguistic programming to better understand how you think and feel and how others do the same, you are both consciously and subconsciously, making an effort to be a more effective communicator.

At the heart of communication is the passage of information from one party to another. You want to be able to take the thoughts that are in your head and impart them to someone else. The most effective way to do that is to ensure that what you are about to say is clear, organized, and thoughtfully laid out. When we talked about mind management all the way back in Chapter 2, we discussed ways to clear your mind of mental clutter. In the next segment, we'll take that concept farther to help you organize your thoughts and create ways to communicate with clarity and brevity.

Using NLP to Organize Your Thoughts for Better Communications

The use of neuro-linguistic programming for personal organization is a great way to improve your communication skills. By utilizing your visualization skills, you can create blank spaces in which you can sort through your thoughts and organize them into complete concepts. When you clear your mind through visualization, you can then bring in only the ideas you need to organize for communication.

By starting with a blank slate, you can focus on paring down your thoughts when you need to build a presentation for work or school, have a serious conversation with a coworker or loved one, or just figure out how to control a raging mind to have regular everyday interactions. When you are visualizing, tell yourself that you are only going to sort out the thoughts that are absolutely necessary and that you'll be storing away all unnecessary thoughts and distractions.

Imagine a table and a filing cabinet. During your visualization exercise, picture yourself, putting the thoughts you need on the table and the thoughts you do not need in the filing cabinet. Once you've done that, mentally arrange the thoughts on the table into an order which makes sense to express your thoughts to others. When you've done that, take a mental picture of what those thoughts look like.

You can even give yourself an anchor to remember what you've visualized. This could be memorizing the first letter of sentences, making up a little rhyme to remind yourself of your concepts, or a mental snapshot of what's on the table. When it's time to have that conversation or work on that project, you'll be able to quickly recall how you organized those thoughts and ideas and express them with ease and confidence.

Have you ever seen a high school debate team match? The students are learning to use critical thinking and argument skills in a timed setting and convey their thoughts in a clear, succinct manner. They often memorize their talking points or work from index cards with small notes or mnemonics to keep them on track as they speak. When you use NLP to organize your thoughts for better communication, think of it as a little high school debater in your head, putting your thoughts in order and making little reminder notes to keep you concise and on topic.

Speaking to People in Their Own Style

In Chapters 4 and 5, we spent a lot of time looking at communication styles and identifying how you and others think and feel. When you are comfortable with your own communication skills and have confidence in your ability to read other

people, you can begin to be flexible with how you communicate with them.

Being able to find your situational voice is actually something that comes quite easily. Humans already do this instinctually and subconsciously; we do not speak to infants in the same tone and language that we do our coworkers, and we don't speak to coworkers in the same tone we speak to our friends. When you can assess a situation and decide what your best approach is for communicating, you have already become a more effective communicator.

If you speak to someone else in their style, tone, and language, you are showing them that you can relate to them. When people feel respected and relevant, they are more open to a working dialogue and healthy communication of ideas. If a work contact speaks to you using a lot of technical terms, you can either also use the technical terms or ask for clarification if you need to. This shows your colleague that you are listening to them and that you are speaking or attempting to speak their same language. When you ask a question, you're also giving them an opportunity to open up more, which will, in turn, give you a better insight into that person.

The tone we use when we communicate with others is just as important as the words we use. When you're speaking with someone who is a sunny optimist, you are going to use a different tone than if you were speaking to a perpetual pessimist. You can judge how someone reacts to your tone almost immediately and adjust yourself accordingly. The ability to do so is a significant mark of an effective coordinator. If you look and listen intensely during the first few minutes of a conversation with a new person, you will rapidly get a handle on what tone you should use as you continue speaking with them.

The key to relating to people through verbal communication also includes being mindful of your non-verbal cues. This is especially true in international business settings or travel scenarios because there are cultural differences in gestures and acceptable postures. When you are trying to speak with someone with whom you literally do not share any verbal language, you can use your facial expressions and gestures to convey your tone. Have an open posture and smile. This display

of friendliness will aid you in interacting in situations with a language barrier. Remember, smiling is a universal expression of goodwill.

NLP and the Art of Persuasion

In the course of using NLP for communication, you may be wondering what more of the practical applications are when dealing with other people. One of the strongest uses of neuro-linguistic programming is the art and the power of *persuasion*. When you are talking to someone, and you want to turn the conversation in your favor, you'll want to use this skill. It's useful for all aspects of your life from dealing with unruly children to landing a big sell at work.

Neuro-linguistic programming, by its very nature, lends itself to the art of persuasion. When you use NLP practice for yourself, you are changing your own thoughts and internal language to affect behaviors. When you use NLP as a persuasive tactic, you are changing someone else's thoughts and internal language. It can be very effective in getting people to complete tasks without having to be commanded or even conventionally asked to do so. It should be noted, neuro-linguistic programming should never be used to persuade someone into doing something that will harm themselves or others.

Using NLP for persuasive purposes means using very specific language and techniques to subtly get your audience, whether one person or a thousand people, to do what you want. Before you balk, it's not brainwashing, and it's not a Jedi mind trick. It's using the art of language to get people thinking and change their behavior, and that's what NLP is all about, right?

One of the easiest ways to incorporate NLP persuasion into your conversations is to ask a loaded question. Instead of asking someone if they want something, ask them what specific type of that something do they want? This is a classic grandmother's move. If Granny asks you if you want a cookie, you might decline. But if Granny asks you if you want chocolate chip or oatmeal raisin, you will almost always take a cookie. Granny just persuaded you to have a treat by giving you the illusion of choice, but there was no choice to not have a cookie at

all.

Another way to use NLP persuasion in everyday life is to make sure you don't end a sentence with seeming uncertainty. You can do this by avoiding a lilt at the end of your words, which lift the end of your statement up like a question. Instead, make sure your voice lowers at the end of what you are saying. This makes your words seem more factual and makes you sound more confident. Try this:

Lilt up: "I'm going to head to the campground this weekend."

Lower down: "I'm going to head to the campground this weekend."

Which of those statements carried more weight to it? You can try this little trick with almost every sentence to make it sound confident and have certainty.

Embedded commands are another tried and true NLP persuasion technique. You can do this with either a statement or a question, but it goes like this. You want to convince someone to do something, maybe stay at the pub for one more round. You can persuade your friend by making an inclusive statement like, "Let's have another beer." Now you're in it together, how can he say no?

Framing an embedded command with a question also works very well. For example, if you are a parent trying to talk your little one into complying with directions, you may want to use a question to embed the command. This gives your child a semblance of control over their choices, and children love to feel as if they have been granted a choice rather than an edict. For example, you can ask your child, "Do you want to put your pajamas on before or after you brush your teeth?" Your child doesn't actually have the option not to complete both tasks, but they do have the option of choosing the order.

What if you have a chore that you're not exactly keen on doing. It's getting late, you're tired, and the garbage can is full. Do you suck it up, put on shoes, and take out the trash, or do you use NLP to get your partner to take it out? By implying that you will do something at the bidding of someone else, that other

person will more often than not offer to just handle the task themselves. The trash example would look something like this:

Direct: “Honey, can you take out the trash?”

- This is open for being denied.

NLP persuasion: “Oh, honey, I’ll take out the trash, if you’d like me to.”

- This will often be met with a, “Don’t worry about it, babe, I got it.”

Neuro-linguistic programming’s persuasion techniques also include the use of the words ‘and’ and ‘but.’ These small but powerful words can change the entire tone and meaning of a sentence. When you use ‘and’ and ‘but,’ be mindful of where you use them in a sentence and how you place the phrases before and after them. For example:

Negative: “I had a great workout at the gym, but I also went to the dentist.”

- You’ve emphasized the bad part of your day.

Positive: “I had to go to the dentist, but I had a great workout at the gym.”

- You’ve put the emphasis on the good part of your day.

How you choose your language has an impact on the people you are talking to. When you place more significance on positive things rather than negative things, you show others that you are an optimist and confident in yourself. The word ‘and’ works similarly to ‘but’; the way you position the phrases around the ‘and’ can define you beyond your words. Here’s the example using ‘and’:

Negative: “My day? I had a great workout, and I had to go to the dentist.”

Positive: “My day? I had to go to the dentist, and I had a great workout!”

Remember, what people hear last is what they will internalize. This is why public speakers try to end with strong conclusions to their presentations. It’s why the pastor puts the lesson at the end of the sermon, and why TV shows have

cliffhanger episodes. If you want people to remember and act on what you've said, place the important stuff last.

There's one more neuro-linguistic programming persuasion technique that you'll want to try, and this one is useful when you are trying to draw information out of another person rather than persuade them to do something for you. Ask them what they want. That sounds simplistic, but what we mean is this: when someone tells you they don't know what they want for their birthday or where they want to go for dinner, chances are good that they are lying.

These lies aren't malicious; they are borne of a desire to not be a burden or to suggest something that you may not like. Frame some loaded questions to draw the information out. Ask your partner things like, "If we had a million dollars, where would you like to go for vacation?" or, "If we had a teleporter, where would you want to go eat?"

Obviously, you and your partner probably aren't millionaires, and you don't have a teleporter because quantum physics hasn't advanced far enough yet, but you do have an imagination. If your partner says, they'd like to go to Italy to eat dinner, find a nice Italian place and make reservations. People are more willing to tell you what they really want when they don't feel restraints or limitations. You've persuaded the information out of your partner.

NLP and the art of persuasion are intrinsically intertwined. Try practicing these persuasion techniques at home and at work, and you'll see how well they work. Your children will be more compliant and less argumentative, and your colleagues will see you as a stronger, more confident coworker.

When you are practicing NLP persuasion, don't forget to use your non-verbal communication skills, as well. Maintaining positive body language will help people open up to you, and using matching and mirroring will aid in building a quicker rapport and stronger connection. Now that you've got plenty of persuasion techniques and non-verbal cues to practice let's keep going with your communication methods. Next, we'll look at identifying someone's thought and

speech patterns and using NLP to interrupt and reset them.

Learning Patterns and Employing Pattern Interruption

One of the most effective ways to get people thinking differently is to interrupt their thoughts. Learning how to identify patterns is crucial to good use of NLP and to better communications. You can use *pattern interruption* on others, but you can also use it on yourself. Let's take a look at how it works.

Everyone has, at one time or another, gotten stuck in a proverbial rut. This can be a cycle of negative thinking, disillusionment with work or chores, or a routine of doing the same activities over and over until they have lost their appeal. When you're in a rut, how can you shake yourself out of it? When you know someone else who is in a rut, how can you help them get back on track?

The answer is fairly easy- you want to interrupt the pattern. This can be achieved in different ways, depending on the situation or scenario. If you are at work and you are trying to talk to a coworker about a new project you want them on board for, they may feel like they can't get involved because they are too set in their ways and their tasks. They are caught in a cycle or a rut of the mundane. Shake them up with vivid language. Use words that you wouldn't usually hear in your workplace. Get your coworker thinking about what could be, instead of what is. Break their pattern. You'll be able to get them talking and being excited about new prospects.

If you are feeling in a rut in your personal life, think about why. Do you keep a boring routine? Go to the same restaurants with the same people eating the same things week after week? While it's nice to have a neighborhood hangout, it's also really good for your well-being and your mental state to change things up every once in a while. Check out a new diner or bar and try some new food. Pick a new activity for you and your friends to try. If you always play darts, go bowling. If you always go out for Italian, go out for Thai. Find a way to freshen up your social life. You'll make new memories and have new things to talk about with your mates.

If you or someone you know is in a mental or emotional rut, try humor and fresh air, not necessarily in that order. When you get outside and go for a walk, you can do one of two things. you can think about your problems while you walk, and the change of scenery can give you a new perspective on our thoughts, or you can get so caught up in nature that you forget about your problems for a while. This leaves your brain fresher for problem-solving later on. Either way, you have broken the pattern of your worries.

In a similar way, humor can startle us out of a rut or a poor mental state. Have you ever been in a foul mood, having one of those days where a cloud is just following you? Everyone has had a day like that at some point in their lives. But out of nowhere, something funny happens, and when you laugh, you just feel that gloom lifting off your shoulders. The humorous situation has interrupted the pattern of your bad mood. You can help others out of a funk by sending a little humor their way, too.

You may be wondering what pattern interruption has to do with communication. When people, including you, are ‘stuck,’ it becomes difficult to be open to conversation and new ideas. Communication works best when all parties are feeling both expressive and receptive to giving and gaining information. If you can master pattern interruption, you can get yourself and others unstuck and open up new, better lines of communication.

Tying It All Together

This chapter held a lot of information about communicating with yourself and with others, ranging from organizing your thoughts to the art of persuasion and pattern interruption. Before we move on to Chapter 7, where we’ll talk about using these communication skills to curb and redirect conflicts, let’s do a quick recap.

To be a better communicator, use your NLP skills to:

- Visualize your way to more organized, concise thoughts

- Identify and use the correct situational tone

- Employ appropriate verbal and non-verbal styles in conversation

- Persuade others to fall in line with your wants and your way of thinking

- Interrupt thought patterns which are not conducive to effective communication

Neuro-linguistic programming can be the most useful communication tool in your mental toolbox, and practicing the techniques you learned in this chapter will help you even more as we move on to the next skill, that of conflict resolution and creating effective collaboration. Let’s take a look!

CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COLLABORATION

IF YOU'RE A HUMAN BEING, you've had a conflict at some point in your life. No one can navigate this crazy world without a little bit of tension or without a disagreement. It's how you choose to deal with conflict that can define you, and you'll want to make sure you come out on the winning side of your conflicts without looking bad. NLP can help you do that. Let's take a look at the anatomy of conflict and how you can handle such an issue with calm and grace.

What Causes Personal Conflicts?

By definition, conflict is nothing more than a difference of opinion. Tell that to someone as they are crying over a fight with a romantic partner, or to a mother whose child is deployed in a war zone. It's an oversimplification, and human nature doesn't always play nicely with oversimplifications. For our purposes, we are going to talk primarily about conflicts at home and in the workplace, not conflicts in the broader scope of nations at war. No disrespect is meant, of course.

If a conflict is a difference of opinion, then why don't people, in general, just talk it out and find common ground? Why do arguments escalate and cause rifts and bad feelings? The answer is most likely that people don't like to be wrong, and even further, don't like to admit that they are wrong. Arguing in and of itself isn't unhealthy; people need to be able to express different viewpoints, and the world would be a terribly boring place if we all thought and felt the same things.

Personal conflicts can range from fights with a spouse, partner, or child to workplace disagreements. While there are instances when professional disagreement can lead to positive advances (see also Bill Gates and Steve Jobs), but for most of us, a conflict at work can be an uncomfortable situation at best. Conflict at home can be even worse, and no family is immune to the occasional disagreement and sometimes out and out screaming match. No household with a teenager is immune to a slamming bedroom door.

At home, arguments with partners usually stem from a belief by each party that they are in the right, no matter what topic spawned the disagreement. These conflicts play out in yelling, screaming, the silent treatment, banishment to the proverbial doghouse of sleeping on the couch, and, unfortunately, can possibly include physical violence. (If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic assault, please visit www.the hotline.org for assistance. The website is escapable by hitting the x to return to Google, and cannot be re-accessed by hitting the back button.)

What do partners argue about? The top reasons are money, children and parenting styles, and intimacy. Being able to deal with conflict with your partner is crucial to maintaining a happy household and will use all your communication skills, including your NLP persuasion techniques.

The same goes for conflict with your children. Parents and children often clash as children change and mature. The conflicts often change as children age. Young kids will try to rebel against bedtime and cleaning up their toys. Older children and teenagers will argue over privileges and personal style. Children will push back against their parents at every stage of development because they are desperately trying to prove that they are their own person.

Conflict with friends and extended family is almost always an ideological conflict. People are different, and that’s wonderful, but sometimes those different styles and opinions can lead to arguments. It’s saddening and frustrating to fight with people you love, and most of these arguments are based on both parties being convinced that their side is the ‘right’ side. In the case of immoral or

unethical activity, there is almost always a right and wrong, but for matters of opinion, there are a lot of gray areas.

At work, conflict can arise for a multitude of reasons. Workplaces are stressful, and people under stress tend to be short-tempered and less tolerant of one another. Workplaces are also spaces where people of varied backgrounds and beliefs come together, and there is bound to be a clash of personalities at some point. Everyone is not required to like everyone else in a work setting, but being able to find respect is key to a happy work environment.

A new form of personal conflict has come to the forefront with the endlessly growing prevalence of social media. People use social media platforms to share their personal experiences with the world, but by doing so, they are leaving themselves vulnerable to conflict and attack from friends, family, and strangers. This can create an unhealthy space where people feel comfortable, causing pain and conflict to others from behind the safety of a keyboard. Social media conflict has, sadly, had negative consequences in real life, causing mental health issues and in some extreme cases, self-harm. This is commonly known as cyber-bullying, and this conflict in a virtual space can be just as real as an argument with a person standing in front of you.

Now that we've had an overview of how personal conflict can affect you at home, at work, and online, let's take a look at some basic techniques for de-escalating these types of situations and for using NLP to reset after conflict and direct what happens next.

De-escalation Techniques

Because conflicts in life are inevitable, it stands to reason that there needs to be a way to resolve these conflicts to the satisfaction of all those involved. To be able to bring down hostility levels and enact a peaceful solution, it's important to learn how to de-escalate conflict. This can be done in a number of ways, and you can use your NLP skills to determine what tone and language you should use to best remedy a conflict situation.

For disagreements with loved ones, it’s vital to be able to understand why the conflict occurred. You can use your visualization and modeling techniques to put yourself in the shoes of that loved one to get a grasp as to why they are so upset with you or with each other. Because you know the people in your inner circle so well, this shouldn’t be too difficult. Try to use your sympathetic and empathetic skills to the test and determine why everyone, including yourself, is feeling the way they do.

When dealing with children, which can be especially frustrating, keep in mind that they are still learning to navigate the world and gain emotional maturity. A young child may honestly not understand why what they’ve done to anger you is so unacceptable, and you should step away from the situation to gather yourself as the adult. Put the child in time out, or walk away from the argument to give yourself time to cool down before the situation gets worse.

To resolve a scenario with a misbehaving or angry child, use soft language, and open non-verbal cues. Explain why their actions or words were wrong or hurtful, and use your persuasive language to bring them gently around to your way of thinking. Ask your child if they know why they are in trouble, and explain that you love them, but you can’t let them act in an unruly, disrespectful manner. Give your child the opportunity to explain themselves, and if the volume level begins to go back up, remind them that you’re having a conversation, not a shouting match.

When we teach children from a young age that it’s okay to be angry but that there are ways of handling it without shouting and slamming doors, we teach them that they can be confident in their emotions and in sharing their feelings with adults. We also teach them to be responsible for their actions and that there are consequences for unacceptable behavior. Building a foundation of personal responsibility and healthy emotional expression when children are young can help them be better, more assertive communicators later on.

Resolving conflicts with our partners, siblings, parents, and close friends also require the time to cool down, reflect on why everyone is upset, and choose a

tone and words that convey how you feel without being too harsh. Remember, it is okay to be angry, but it's never okay to be cruel. If you are feeling too angry to have a constructive conversation, you should say so, because just walking away can create more bad feelings. It's perfectly alright to tell someone that you want to talk, but you're just not ready yet. Then you can remove yourself from the situation and settle yourself down before continuing your conflict resolution.

When it comes time to discuss the disagreement, don't forget your listening skills. A vast majority of the time, when a small matter gets blown into a bigger conflict, it's because one or both sides felt like the other wasn't paying attention to what they were saying, leading to hurt feelings and more anger. There are not many times; in fact, when your listening skills will come more in handy than during conflict resolution. This is especially true when you are working through a conflict with someone with whom you are very close.

Of course, you might think the easiest and best way to resolve conflict might be to just apologize and move on. While this is a simple solution, it's not a good long-term fix because it only masks whatever underlying issue sparked the conflict in the first place. Your communication skills and your persuasion powers need to be at play when de-escalating a conflict with a loved one. Make sure they know that even though you are having a disagreement, that you still love them and that your affection for them far outweighs your ill-will from the argument. When you are open with people about your emotions, good and bad, they are more likely to be open in return.

Conflicts at work can be a little bit trickier to navigate but follow the same general principals as resolving conflict at home. You want to put yourself in the shoes of the people who are involved in the conflict and see things from every side. Use positive language and tone. It helps to remember the 'and' and 'but' technique from the last chapter. Frame your words carefully to bring the conflict down, not give it an opening to heat up.

When you and your colleagues are embroiled in a conflict or a heated debate about how something should be done, walk away from the impasse for a while if

you can. Tell everyone to go home and think about it, and reconvene in the morning. When people are in a negative state, they get caught in a negative feedback loop, and it's important to break the cycle. This is where pattern interruption comes into play.

Have you ever seen a movie scene where there is a big family argument, and every person is screaming and trying to get their point across, and it's just one big melee of noise and angry voices? Then someone stands up on a table and screams or whistles loudly and everyone just stops in their tracks and focuses their attention on that person? That's pattern interruption to de-escalate the conflict. That person has interrupted the flow of the conflict and redirected the attention of the people who were fighting.

This isn't always the best solution, but when speaking in positive tones and using NLP persuasion techniques don't seem to be working, this extreme measure will, at the very least, stop people in their tracks. Once this sudden pattern interruption occurs, then more calm methods of conflict resolution can resume.

Using NLP to Reset the Tone

One of the most important things to remember about conflict is that it begins when people don't feel valued or heard. When resolving conflict, whether at home or in the workplace, neuro-linguistic programming can be a key methodology for bringing about peace and calm. It's only when all parties involved in a conflict can effectively communicate that compromise and resolution can be found.

If you are involved in the conflict, the first thing you need to do is find your own calm. Use your visualization techniques to draw you out of your negative state into a positive one. You'll be much better equipped to negotiate or handle an emotional conversation. You can also use your NLP to organize your thoughts if you have to present your side of a conflict with other people.

When you want to help other people calm down and be able to speak, use your

powers of persuasion. You can use loaded questions to guide them in the right emotional direction and frame your sentences in a positive, confident light by avoiding end lilt. Because NLP is based on the premise that changing your words can change your actions, choose your language and your tone wisely when de-escalating a situation or finding a resolution. How you speak and act will set the tone for the others around you. While people may still be angry, they will realize that yelling and screaming while you are speaking calmly and thoughtfully makes them look foolish.

It’s also important to remember how vital non-verbal communication can be in times of conflict. How you carry yourself has an impact, and when you want to resolve conflict, eye contact can be a key factor. Hold the gaze of the person who you are in conflict with; chances are good that they will be the one who breaks eye contact. This is a simple, effective way to show your confidence and determination without saying a word.

You should also make eye contact when you are charged with resolving a dispute between two other parties. When you make eye contact with someone as they are describing something that made them angry, you are telling them that their words and their feelings matter to you. When people feel heard, people will be more open to listening as well. You cannot have compromise and resolution if people won’t listen to each other.

Posture plays a big role in conflict resolution, as well. You can tell from someone’s stance if they are feeling open or closed to communication. If you want to begin resolving a conflict, open and soften your posture and watch as those around you, subconsciously begin to match or mirror you. Once everyone in the room has calmed themselves into a less defensive posture, communication to resolve the conflict can begin.

Metamodeling for Problem-Solving

When everyone has calmed down, had time to state their arguments, and is in the right state of mind to continue working towards a solution that is agreeable to

everyone, it’s time to problem-solve your way to conflict resolution. One of the ways to do this with neuro-linguistic programming is through an exercise called *metamodeling*.

Metamodeling is a technique that goes beyond your regular visualization or modeling techniques to truly change the way you and others feel about a particular situation. When you are in conflict with someone else, you may feel slighted or unheard. Chances are very good that the other person is feeling the same way. Therefore, even though you are embroiled on opposite sides of a disagreement, there’s already common ground to start from.

Metamodeling teaches us to challenge our perceptions and rid ourselves of any thoughts which might interfere with coming to a solid, agreeable conclusion. There are key questions asked in metamodeling that play heavily into changing the language of conflict and finding a new language with which to move forward. When you are looking to metamodel either by yourself or in conjunction with other people, you should ask:

- Were generalizations made that led to misunderstanding?

- Did anyone jump to conclusions without proper information?

- Did someone set in motion a string of causes and effects?

- Did someone base an argument on a presupposition about someone else?

- Has someone acted upon a belief not upheld by all parties?

Conflict in and of itself does not appear from thin air; something has to set it in motion. By using these questions to metamodel the situation, you can look at it with a fresh perspective. Because these questions are pointed but not accusatory, you and all parties involved in a disagreement can think them through and talk them out. When you find the heart of the misperception that caused the conflict, only then can you find the solution.

When you begin to answer these questions, you will find that the conflict can be

boiled down to a starting point. Once you've found the starting point, you can effectively begin to challenge the perceptions that the disagreement stemmed from. Using NLP, you can begin to change the language of the dispute to a positive, focused attempt to find resolution and compromise.

Can't We All Just Get Along?

Sometimes, conflicts can't be completely resolved, and that's when it becomes necessary to lay boundaries. There are times when people's personal beliefs and perceptions simply don't align and never will. This can be a cause of tension and conflict, especially in the workplace, so how can you find ways to compromise so that you can still be productive?

In the real world, people hold different values, varying political views, and practice lifestyles that not everyone will agree with. We have to navigate this life together, so how can we maintain peace and not get into disagreements at every turn? We have to be open communicators, and we have to set boundaries.

Many places of work have boundaries imposed by policy- you cannot discuss religion or politics during office hours. Laws are in place to prevent discrimination based on race or gender. We need to be honest with ourselves and be open enough to recognize that we all have preconceived notions and biases about other people and groups of people. This is endemic in society and has been the basis of war and international conflict throughout human history. How can you avoid your home or workplace becoming ground zero for an unsolvable conflict?

The first is to be respectful. While NLP is about the use of language, it's also important to know when to hold your tongue. Put things into context; for example, you may not like Jane from Accounting. She's younger, seems to have different values, and she dyes her hair funky colors. You're older, more conservative, and you'd rather die than dye. That's fine. Clearly, you are not interested in being Jane's friend. But is she good at her job? Does she get her tasks done promptly and without issue? Then you need to alter your perception

of her. Stop thinking, “I don’t like her hair” and start thinking, “I really like her work ethic.” You will find yourself being more benevolent towards Jane because you have changed the language with which you speak to herself about her. Consequently, you will use a more respectful tone and attitude when you speak directly to her.

At home, conflict can occur because people are too similar rather than different. Parents pass on their personality traits to their children and then become annoyed when their children exhibit them. Why is this? Because we see ourselves in their behaviors, and it reminds us that we are not perfect. In order to maintain a harmonious household, you need to look to yourself first. Ask what you can do to better de-escalate conflict when it occurs.

Are you the kind of parent that tends to get upset first and ask questions later? Use your NLP visualizations to calm yourself down and handle the situation with a clean slate. Do you see traits in your children that you don’t like, and you know those traits are being modeled from you? Change the model for your children by changing your own behavior. Children follow what they see, so give them a better base of behavior, and you will see a change in the whole household.

When you argue with your spouse or partner, what’s the most frequent reason for your disagreements? Is it money, intimacy, parenting style? The best thing you can do to avoid and de-escalate conflicts with a partner is to use your listening skills. Give each other the time to be heard and offer your perceptions of what’s happening. Use metamodeling to work through your preconceived ideas of who’s at fault and why your conflicts are occurring. Be honest and open. Use positive language. Break the pattern and walk away if you need to. Once you have used these techniques to come to a resolution, it will become easier each time. Eventually, you will have created a new behavior of talking things out *before* conflict arises.

NLP and Effective Collaboration

Collaboration is defined as the action of working with other(s) to create or produce something. Collaboration is a necessary part of life, from a child helping with chores at a young age to projects throughout school to managing projects in the workplace. We have to have the ability to work with others to be able to navigate life. How can NLP help with smooth, conflict-free collaborations?

The first key is open communications. The only way for a project to be completed to satisfaction by more than one person is to make sure that everyone's roles are completely defined. Being able to organize your thoughts, present them to other people in a manner that is understood, and being able to express your needs in an assertive manner will take you a long way in the realm of working together with others.

The second key factor in successful collaborations is persuasion. Imagine that you are divvying up a group project and that there is a segment you really, really don't want to be assigned to do. The problem is, no one else particularly wants to do it either. If you know your partners, you can focus on the person who is best equipped to handle that task and use your persuasive powers to convince them they are the obvious choice for such an important part of the project.

The third factor crucial to being part of a successful collaboration is to manage expectations and perceptions. If you lay out a plan from the beginning of the project, you can avoid most, if not all, of the misperceptions we laid out when we talked about metamodeling. By making sure that there is no allowance for misunderstanding, you can quell any conflict before it has the chance to begin.

Summary of Conflict Resolution and Collaboration Techniques

Conflicts don't have to be life-changing to be emotionally jarring, and it's crucial to your state of mind to be able to avoid, de-escalate, and resolve conflicts at home and at work. Let's recap the major themes of this chapter:

- Conflicts happen! How can you use NLP to resolve the situation?

- visualize, sympathize, apologize

- de-escalate with pattern interruption and persuasion

- mind your words and your posture

- don’t speak unless you’ve got something respectful to say

- metamodel to find the root of the conflict

- change your perception of people who hold different values

- Collaboration time!

- use good communication skills to convey parameters

- employ persuasion to elicit everyone’s best work

- set reasonable expectations and boundaries before work begins

Now that you’ve got all the basic skills you need to navigate conflict and collaboration, we’re going to move on to the last chapter. We’ll be showing you how to tie all your NLP skills together to visualize and model your way into setting and achieving any goal.

SETTING GOALS AND MOVING FORWARD

WHEN YOU'VE MASTERED the methodology of neuro-linguistic programming, you can set your mind to do just about anything. That's one of the most beautiful things about NLP- it can set your mind free to think about wants and desires, to work out the answers to personal quandaries, and to find ways to better relate to the people and the world around you. In this final chapter, we'll take a look at a variety of ways you can apply NLP to your everyday life to set and achieve goals for now and for years to come.

Classifying Mental States

We've talked a lot about states in the previous chapters, and how your mood and your state of mind affects how you talk to yourself and to others. Here, we'll put the various states into two main categories so that you can better classify them and simplify your NLP practices.

When you are in a good mood, and you are feeling calm and can think clearly, this is what is known as a *resourceful state.* A resourceful state is exactly what it sounds like; when you are in this state, you have all of your mental resources available to you. You are calm and content enough to think with clarity, you are not feeling any negative emotions which might cloud your judgment, and you are free to explore all your thoughts and ideas in a confident, positive manner.

When you are in an *unresourceful state*, this means that you are incapable of reaching out and using your mental resources to full capacity. You could be tired,

angry, upset, even hungry, but you are under assault from negativity and frustration. Whatever is throwing you off from your game, being able to get yourself back from an unresourceful state to a resourceful one is a valuable skill.

Being a resourceful state, all the time, takes practice. You can use your visualization and anchoring skills to create a mental ‘resource room’ for yourself. Picture a place that makes you happy, perhaps a sunny beach or a cozy den with a fireplace roaring. You can add all the little details you like, or you can leave the walls blank, whatever you like because this is your mental space.

When you are done creating a space where you can feel calm and comfortable, anchor it. Take time to commit it to memory and assign it a recall phrase, like ‘happy place’ or ‘day at the beach.’ When you are in need, take a few moments to visualize your space to bring yourself back from the brink. Being able to instantly return to a resourceful state will serve you well both at work and at home. Practice visualization regularly and you’ll be adept at it in no time.

Outlining Goals

“So, what are you doing with your life these days?”

If you’ve ever gotten hit with this question at a family reunion, you’re not alone. How did you answer it? Like most people, you probably stammered something to Uncle So-and-So about being busy at work and walked away. But the question still remains: what *are* you doing with your life these days?

One of the most amazing things about practicing NLP is that you can use it to take you anywhere and do anything. Neuro-linguistic programming is a perfect methodology for setting and attaining goals from the mundane to the fantastic. Let’s take a look at how you can set short-, mid-, and long-term goals and use NLP to set realistic, achievable milestones.

Have you ever heard the acronym SMART used when talking about setting goals? It’s a wonderful system, and you can use it in conjunction with your NLP visualization to realize your dreams. First, let’s take a look at the SMART

method:

S is for specific: can you set a goal that has a defined, detailed conclusion?

M is for measurable: how will you know you achieved the desired outcome?

A is for achievable: what methods are available to you to accomplish the goal?

R is for relevance: how worthwhile is this accomplishment? What's the reward?

T is for time: how long should it take me to complete this achievement?

By first measuring your goal against the SMART acronym, you can better define what you would like to use NLP to accomplish.

When you want to use NLP to achieve short-term goals, visualization is a great way to do it. Short-term goals are goals that are generally defined as being slated for completion within a year. This could be something like a weight-loss goal or saving money for a moderate purchase like a new television or computer. Using NLP can keep you motivated and on track.

To utilize NLP to work on short-term goals, just use your imagination. Put yourself into a resourceful state, and then think about what you want to achieve. Focus on the end goal. If you'd like to lose some weight, think about going shopping for a fabulous new wardrobe next spring. If you'd like to purchase a new television, visualize yourself watching your favorite sports on that new TV. Use all your senses to enjoy the sensation of those new clothes or the thrill of seeing your favorite players in UltraHD.

Once you've visualized the endpoint, anchor it. Make sure to give yourself a recall trigger for the way you felt when you reached the goal in your mind. When you are feeling discouraged, you can use that recall to remind yourself of what you are working towards. While you are working on the goal, you can use NLP along the way to give you motivation.

Setting and achieving goals is harder than people like to mention. Setbacks can be discouraging, and it can be easier to lose focus and give up than to fight. But

neuro-linguistic programming is all about changing your life through changing your behaviors, so use it to your advantage. When you are feeling disheartened, turn back to your visualization techniques to keep you on track. For instance, if you are trying to lose weight, use NLP to talk yourself through tough days. Visualize yourself stomping out calories. Picture yourself standing on a scale and watching the number go down. When using NLP to achieve your goals, the only limit is your imagination.

You can also use NLP to both visualize and model your way to achieving mid-term and long-term goals. Mid-term goals might be saving money to purchase a vehicle or pay for your wedding, or completing your degree. These are goals that generally might take between a year and five years to accomplish. It's easy to visualize the outcome of these goals, but it's the interim that can be difficult.

You want to keep your eyes on the prize, but in the meantime, you can use visualization to help you every step of the way. Break the goal down into chunks, and imagine accomplishing each piece. Be sure to take note of how achieving that goal will make you feel. Picture yourself driving a new car, or walking down the aisle in your dream wedding dress. Being able to connect all of your senses to visualization can make it feel real- and when you've done that, you've given yourself the perception that you can do anything you've set your mind to.

Being able to model is another good technique for mid-term and long-term goals. Think about the people you know or people you admire who have achieved what you want to achieve. How did they do it? If your goal is to retire at 50 and travel the world, look to others who have done so. Read and study what they did to achieve that dream, and use NLP to convince yourself that you can, too. Speak to yourself in tones of positivity. Use your modeling skills to put yourself into the shoes of people who have already succeeded.

If you'd like to become a recording artist, find a recording artist you admire and try to recreate their path. The same goes for any profession you'd like to excel at. Children exhibit modeling without even knowing what they are doing, every

time they quote a line from an action movie or copy the batting stance of their favorite baseball player. Find that childlike sense of wonder and channel it into visualization and modeling to find your own success.

Remember that NLP is a tool, and like any tool, it is only as effective as the person handling it. You need to practice to make perfect, and even then, you need to practice some more. When you are feeling frustrated, you can go back to basics. Try modeling the workout techniques of someone you've observed at your gym and see if your workouts improve. Try visualizing beautiful vacation spots to lift your mood. Don't get discouraged- even prima ballerinas practice their positions. Fundamentals are there for a reason.

Five Principles of Success

How do you measure success, and how can you be sure that you are achieving it? Neuro-linguistic programming methodology teaches us that there are five ways to define and measure the success of your goals as you work on them. Take a look:

1) Know your outcome- This aligns well with the SMART goal method. You need to know what the end result is that you are looking to achieve. Make sure the goal is something that is achievable through ethical methods that do not hurt yourself or others. Be positive language and set goals that define what you want, not what you don't want. Use visualization to anchor how you will feel when you have achieved your goal.

2) Take action- This might sound like common sense, but what use is setting a goal if you have no intention of completing the steps necessary to achieve it? You need to use positive language, tell yourself you can attain anything you set your mind to, and then get up and do it! Sometimes the first step can be the hardest, but send that job application, make that phone call, and apply for those student loans! Whatever it is you want to accomplish, you will go nowhere without taking the plunge.

3) Maintain good communication skills- When you are focused on your own

goals, it can be easy to shut out the people around us, but this is a big no-no on the road to success. Keep your eyes and ears open and be a good listener. You don't want to get a reputation as someone who only cares about their own thoughts and dreams. When people are speaking, give them your attention and focus, don't be messing with your internal monologue thinking about what you are going to say next. You also never know when something that someone is saying to you may be an opportunity for you to grow and advance, so shut up and listen!

4) Be flexible- They say the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Don't be so set in your ways that you can't see when something isn't working. Another one of the most amazing things about neuro-linguistic programming is that you can do incredible things inside your head without wasting physical resources, which means your internal virtual drawing board will never run out of paper! Take time to assess your progress as you work towards your goals, and don't hesitate to scrap a plan that clearly isn't working. Just come up with a new plan- there are twenty-five more letters in the alphabet after Plan A.

5) Anchor yourself for excellence- Just as good moods are contagious, so are resourceful states. If you are feeling up to the challenge of a task, so also will the people around you. When you're just not feeling it, take a few moments and recall your 'happy place' anchor. You'll instantly start to feel better, and so will your colleagues; you can move onward and upward into success together.

Talk Yourself Into (and Out of) Anything

Let's talk about fear, more specifically, phobias. What are you afraid of, and can you use NLP to alleviate or eliminate those fears? The answer is yes. You can absolutely use neuro-linguistic programming to deal with fear.

Visualization is a great place to start. Let's say you are afraid of dogs. That's a fairly common phobia, with approximately ten percent of American adults citing a fear of canines. How can you use visualization to overcome your phobia? First,

put yourself in a resourceful state. Take some deep breaths and be calm. Now, imagine a dog comes into your mental happy place. It's a medium-sized mutt with floppy ears and a sort-of shaggy coat. This conjured-up dog isn't real, but you may still feel a fear reaction. Perhaps your palms go a little clammy and your heart races a little bit.

Take some more deep breaths and observe the dog. Does it look threatening? Maybe it's even a little cute. Use your 'and' and 'but' statements to change your perception of the dog. Say, "That dog could bite me, BUT he probably only wants me to pet him," or, "That dog could jump on me, BUT he really isn't very big." These statements take your fear into account in the first half and put positive, rational thought in the trailing half.

The next thing you're going to do in your visualization is sit down and let the dog sniff you- you don't have to touch it yet. Listen as the pup snuffles your shoes and your legs, trying to pick up your scent. Smell the distinctive odor of the dog's fur, and look carefully at the dog, observing its behaviors and its appearance.

Next, imagine putting your hand out for the dog to smell. Perhaps he even licks you- be sure to visualize the warm, wet tickle on your palm. Now, you can reach out and pet the dog. Feel the warmth of the dog's skin under their coat. Slide your hand across their fur and imagine the sensation. Watch the dog's tail wag as he expresses joy at receiving love. Remember that dogs are living creatures who desire attention and affection, just like humans.

Once you've been able to pet the dog in your visualization, put an anchor on that feeling. Doesn't it feel liberating to have gotten to that point? Now the next time you see a dog in real life, you may not quite be ready to give them belly rubs, but you probably won't recoil in fear. Work on it, like any other goal. See yourself at the finish line, being able to co-exist with dogs in a healthier fashion.

You can do this with almost every phobia you can think of. Fear of flying? Visualize taking a successful plane trip. Fear of spiders? Visualize being a giant

and stomping out all the eight-legged buggers. The point is, you can use visualization to talk yourself into and out of hypothetical situations, even those that cause you to experience fear.

Visualization also works well to deal with social anxieties. If you have to attend a social event that is giving you pause, take some time beforehand to imagine the party. Think about all the good things that will happen if you attend; this could be good food, a band playing music you like to listen to, or seeing an old friend who is traveling from out of town.

Imagine what you are going to wear to the party, and choose something that makes you feel confident and attractive. Imagine your killer shoes and awesome hairdo. Now anchor that feeling and make it happen. When you get to the party, and you start to feel anxious, recall the reasons you wanted to attend, you'll feel better about being there and may actually have a good time!

Another visualization technique that's also a little fun is to use is the swish technique. This method is great when you're trying to make a decision on just about anything. Clear your mind and put yourself in a resourceful state. Then, conjure up a visual list of items surrounding your decision. When you go down the list, imagine yourself swiping away any items that would deter you from reaching your goal. It may sound silly, but even saying the word "swish" while you swipe away, those negatives can help you commit the scene to memory. Once you're left with a list of positives, you can decide whether the matter fits into your SMART goal criteria and go from there.

You can also use visualization and persuasion for mundane things, like redecorating your home. Imagine the time and money you will save if you create multiple bathroom renovations in your head instead of in real life. You can change the tile infinitely inside your head, and only spend money to do it in real life, once. You can use your persuasive powers to get your spouse to cook dinner when you're both too tired to do it. NLP, once learned, is a powerful tool, and the more you use it, the better you will become.

NLP for Life

We've almost come to the end of our NLP journey together, and in this last segment, we'll go over some final miscellaneous applications for neuro-linguistic programming. As you've by now come to realize, NLP can be applied to almost every aspect of your life and will serve you well in many capacities. Let's tie up some of the loose ends and recap the concepts from this last chapter.

One application of NLP that may aid you in work and school is to use visualization to prepare yourself for public speaking. Not only is public speaking a common phobia, but it can also be something that doesn't come easily to many people. When you are charged with giving a presentation or speech in front of a group, you can use NLP for all facets of the project.

First, you can use visualization to set a goal and timeline for your presentation. You can also use NLP to organize your thoughts, layout your project, and picture yourself on stage, delivering the speech. Anchoring a memory of successful delivery can give you the confidence you need to get up in front of people and nail your material.

Another application of NLP in public speaking is to use your powers of persuasion. If you are delivering a sales presentation, you'll want to make sure you are speaking to your audience in an appropriate tone and in language that is relatable and relevant. Make sure you use your persuasion techniques in full force- remember to drop your voice at the end of statements to give them gravitas, make lots of eye contact around the room, and hold yourself with a confident posture.

Neuro-linguistic programming can also help you help others. You can use what you know about NLP to pass your knowledge on to others and help them succeed. If you have school-age children, you can teach them basic visualization and modeling techniques to show them how to set goals and picture themselves being successful. You can also teach them about conflict resolution and being able to get along with others.

There are many aspects of NLP that you can teach to the next generation. You can teach your children to have a strong self-concept from a young age, by showing them a positive way to think about themselves. You can exhibit good communication skills at home so that your children will look to you as a model of good listening and communication. When children have a role model or celebrity they admire, you can encourage them to research and observe that person in a healthy fashion without falling prey to hero-worship.

Being a serious goal-setter is another way you can model NLP to your children, and to your colleagues. When people see you making and accomplishing goals, you can become a model for them to do the same. You can teach others to do what you are doing. Being able to do this will also boost your own confidence, leading you to be empowered to do even more.

Another way in which you can use your NLP skills to help others is to use your sympathy and empathy to encourage others. If you have a friend who is feeling down, show them how to change their state. Take them on a walk and show them how pattern interruption can improve their mood. Talk to them about how they talk to themselves and nudge them to see the good and the positive. You can use ‘and’ and ‘but’ statements to show people that even though a negative may exist, that doesn’t mean that it isn’t outweighed by the positive.

Passing NLP on to other people is just an added bonus of being proficient in the methodology, but it’s important that you do. The practice can be beneficial to so many for such a multitude of reasons. Being able to change the language that guides our behaviors sounds like such a simple thing, but can be positively life-changing. When you help someone else using your NLP skills, it gives you a boost as well, and that’s more than worth the effort.

The Last Recap

It’s that time; we’ve come to the end of our NLP journey together. Let’s do one last checklist to wrap up the concepts we’ve explored in this last chapter:

-Use NLP to improve your mental state

- classify resourceful and unresourceful states
- Use NLP to set and achieve goals
- set SMART goals
- align your dreams with attainable goals
- use visualization and modeling to accomplish your goals
- practice makes perfect
- Measure yourself against the Five Principals of Success
- know your outcome
- take action
- maintain communications
- be flexible
- anchor yourself for success
- Talk yourself out of phobia and into confidence
- use visualization to face your fears
- use modeling to gain confidence
- use anchoring for situational recall
- use the swish method for decision making
- confidently use NLP in everyday life
- Incorporate NLP
- for public speaking from inception through presentation
- to help others

- teach children strong self-concept and communication skills

- help friends and colleagues learn to appreciate themselves

- talk to others in positive language to spread kindness

- practice the fundamentals to achieve success

As we come to the close of our last checklist, we'll leave you with this parting thought from one of the founders of neuro-linguistic programming, Richard Bandler:

"Our biggest limit is not in what we want and cannot do; it is in what we have never considered that we can do."

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for choosing NLP: *An Essential Guide*. We hope you found the techniques and explanations within the preceding pages to be useful and easy to read, and full of all the information you came to find. Neuro-linguistic programming has no been around for several decades, and the longevity of the methodology can be attributed to its success.

This book introduced you to a wide variety of concepts that you can use every day to practice NLP regularly. Don’t forget about the glossary of frequently used terms to help guide you when you need a refresher. Keeling the terminology active in your head will help you be a better practitioner.

To recap all you learned on this journey, you’ll have to travel all the way back to Chapter 1, where we helped you identify your thinker profile and Chapter 2 which discussed mind management and very basic visualization and modeling. By the time you got to Chapter 8, you were ready to tackle using NLP to rid yourself of phobias and set long-term goals! Look how far you came so quickly.

Along the way, you also learned everything you need to know about being a good communicator. This included being able to read other people and how to become a good listener and a concise, effective speaker. We also went over the key components of using NLP for the art and power of persuasion, skills which are necessary for the bustle of today’s modern workplace. Being an open and assertive communicator is a tool that you can use in all facets of your life.

Also of vast importance are the conflict resolution skills that will serve you well at home and in all your endeavors. Being able to de-escalate conflict quickly and calmly will help you navigate all the pitfalls of life and lead you on the path to greater things. When other people see you as a pillar of calm in a crazy world, you will draw to you people who want to travel with you and lift you up along the way.

When you master the skills of neuro-linguistic programming, the world is your oyster. The language that you use with yourself to build yourself up is the language you can also use to build up others, and build a better life for yourself and everyone you come in contact with. You will create stronger relationships, raise stronger children, and be more productive at work and at home.

Remember that language is at the heart of NLP. How we use language, how we hear things from outside stimuli, and how we process what we hear from ourselves and from others shapes our perceptions and our behaviors. Neuro-linguistic programming strives to make us better people and the world a better place through the use of positive communications and more productive behaviors.

By becoming a practitioner of neuro-linguistic programming, you are making a commitment to being a part of that betterment. You are engaging in the world in a way that raises your self-confidence and self-esteem. That can start a chain reaction of goodness, one that projects from you out into the world. Just by reading this book, you have set that chain of positivity into motion.

We invite you to use this guide over and over again, whenever you need a refresher on the basics or need a boost to your self-esteem. The chapters and checklists are designed to be accessible to you no matter which topic you want to brush up on, and we hope you'll visit these pages for guidance and reassurance when you are feeling in need.

One more time, let us thank you for choosing NLP: *An Essential Guide* for your neuro-linguistic programming learning purposes. We hope it was everything you

were hoping for in a primer on a methodology that is truly life-changing. We wish you all the luck as you put these practices to the test for all your goal-setting, conflict-resolving, self-concept boosting needs.

You've learned all the basics, and now it's time to put all your skills to the test. Go forth and visualize your way to a bright, positive future!

GLOSSARY

Below is a list of the major terms associated with neuro-linguistic programming:

Association- When practicing visualization, this is the feeling that you are completing the actions in your imagery through your own eyes. This can be equated to being an actor in a play or TV show.

Anchoring- This is an NLP technique which is used to attach emotions and memories to a particular visualization, by programming the brain to associate the two concepts.

Belief(s)- These are the basic tenets of your life, encompassing what you think to be true about yourself, other people, and the world around you.

Body language- This is the term that covers most non-verbal communication. NLP teaches the practice of reading cues from the stance, posture, and facial expressions on others for better understanding and communication.

Communication style- The four basic communication styles are passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive. Determining the communication style of yourself and others can aid your use of NLP when relating to the people around you.

Compartmentalization- This is the act of using NLP to place your thoughts into orderly storage and setting aside thoughts or concepts that you currently do not

need or want to access.

Conflict resolution (de-escalation)- The act of settling a dispute or disagreement peacefully and to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Dissociation- When practicing NLP visualization, this is the state of feeling as if you are watching things play out in your imagination rather than performing the action yourself. This would be as if you are in the audience of a theater observing the actors on stage.

Matching- This NLP technique is similar to using mirroring during a conversation to build rapport. You can use matching instead of mirroring when mirroring is inappropriate or would be too obvious.

Metamodeling- This is modeling used to problem-solve, based on a series of questions to uncover misperceptions and distortions, which can then be corrected through NLP.

Mirroring- This NLP technique is used to build a rapport with someone when communicating by the subtle mimicking of their same movements, gestures, or language. It shows someone that you are on the same page or level of thinking.

Model(ing)- This is the NLP method of putting yourself into someone else's place to achieve the same things that they have achieved or to perform a task in the same manner that they would use.

NLP (neuro-linguistic programming)- This is the methodology that uses beliefs, modeling, and visualization techniques to change behavior. It is based on the premise that adjusting your thoughts (neuro) and your internal language (linguistics) can lead to an adjustment in your outward behavior (programming).

Non-verbal communication- This is the term that encompasses the body language, facial expressions, and gestures used to convey emotion and attitude without using words.

Pattern interruption- This is the technique of changing your own or someone

else's thought patterns by redirecting the conversation, interjecting a surprise twist or bit of humor, or taking time out from a thought pattern with a new activity or change of scenery.

Perception- In the context of NLP, perception is the way in which you interpret the world around you, and how you organize thoughts and emotions to make psychological connections and catalog experiences.

Personas- This term refers to the facets of your personality, which you show to the world, i.e., your public or work persona and your private persona that you show at home.

Persuasion- In neuro-linguistic programming, this is the practice of using language and subtlety to convince someone to do something you want them to do.

Rapport- This term refers to the sense of connection people feel during verbal and non-verbal communication.

Resourceful state- This is a state of being when you are feeling calm, collected, happy, or content. When you are in a resourceful state, it is easy to practice your NLP to be productive and creative.

Self-concept- This is the term used in NLP to describe how you see yourself. It is more in-depth than self-esteem and investigates how you feel about every aspect of your personality, including how you think others perceive you.

State(s)- This term describes how you are feeling at any given time. Rather than refer to your emotions as happy or sad, you can express this as your mental state. Being happy is a 'good state,' sad is a 'bad state,' calm is a 'relaxed state,' etc. Using this terminology makes it easier to apply NLP to change your state when necessary.

Thinker profile- This is a determination of how you process thoughts and concepts, as well as your outlook on the world around you. Knowing your thinker profile can facilitate how you use neuro-linguistic programming.

Unresourceful state- Being in an unresourceful state means that your mind is disordered, or that you are angry, sad, or upset. Unresourceful states make it difficult to be productive or creative.

Values- This is the term for defining what qualities and aspects of life are the most important to you. Things that you value are the things that carry the most weight and influence on your life and your worldview.

Verbal communication- This is how thoughts, feelings, and ideas are conveyed from one person to another through the use of language and conversation.

Visualization- This basic NLP technique makes use of imagination and the mind's eye to see and think through scenarios before they happen in real life. Visualization is used for most basic and advanced NLP for goal-setting, modeling, and compartmentalization.